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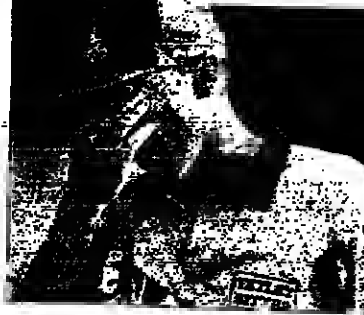
THE INDEPENDENT

No 3183

THURSDAY 2 JANUARY 1997

WEATHER: Very cold

(IR45p) 40p



SPORT
Nothing to cheer in Harare PAGE 22



THE TABLOID
Love and money: how couples share the spoils



COMMENT
Why Julia Roberts loves her Aga PAGE 15

Israel in race to save peace

Backlash feared in Hebron after Jew shoots 8 Arabs

Eric Silver
Jerusalem

Israeli and Palestinian leaders were struggling yesterday to prevent the actions of a fanatical Jewish gunman from derailing an agreement to redeploy Israeli troops in the last West Bank city under occupation. An off-duty Israeli soldier sprayed bullets at Palestinian shoppers in a market in the heart of Hebron yesterday in an attempt to sabotage the imminent handover of about 80 per cent of the city to Palestinian self-rule.

After a long day of diplomatic contacts, talks resumed last night at the home of the United States ambassador, Martin Indyk, near Tel Aviv. The two most senior negotiators, the Israeli Defence Minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's deputy, Mahmud Abbas, returned to the table. David Bar-Illan, chief media adviser to Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, told *The Independent*: "A meeting between Mr Netanyahu and Mr Arafat is possible tonight or tomorrow." He cautioned, however, that there might be delays because of the shooting.

The American mediator Dennis Ross played a key role in bringing the sides together again. He spent the whole of yesterday afternoon in intensive consultations with Mr Arafat in Gaza.

Israeli security forces were on the alert last night after rumours spread from Gaza that the fundamentalist Hamas and Islamic Jihad militias were planning revenge. Khalid Amayreh, a veteran Hebron Arab journalist, commented after the shooting, which wounded eight



Under arrest: Gunman Noam Friedman is taken into custody by Israeli soldiers after being overpowered following his attack in the Hebron market place. Photograph: Reuter

Palestinians: "Had there been a massacre, even Yasser Arafat would not have been able to prevent Hamas avenging the dead."

Mr Netanyahu reacted swiftly to control the damage, telephoning Mr Arafat to condemn the shooting as "a despicable crime". He reiterated his commitment to the speedy implementation of the Hebron redeployment. "No crime," he promised, "will stand in our way."

Saeed Erakat, a leading Palestinian negotiator, said Mr Netanyahu had to choose between the peace process and appeasing Jewish settlers. "The Israeli government," Mr Erakat told *The Independent*, "must

choose - either be partners with us in the peace process, or be partners with the extremists and the settlers. They can't have both. This shooting shows how important the peace process is."

In Hebron, the Arab mayor, Mustafa Natshe, urged restraint so that the agreement could be implemented, but complained that Mr Netanyahu talked only about the settlers' security. "He is forgetting the

Inside
Ten seconds that shook the Middle East. Fanatic aimed to sabotage handover. Arab fears over Clinton's new team. Diary of violence. Page 10

security of the Palestinians. They are left to the mercy of the settlers and the Israelis." Shopkeepers in the market where Noam Friedman, a 19-year-old army conscript armed with an M-16 automatic rifle, were less diplomatic. Ahmed Nasser said: "The settlers must be disarmed and moved out of Hebron. There will never be any security here as long as they can carry guns."

David Wilder, a spokesman for the 450 Hebron Jews, drew a contrary, apocalyptic conclusion. "When Arafat's people take over most of the city, thousands of Palestinians could descend on the Jewish quarter in minutes and overwhelm us," he said. "The only solution is to have the Israeli army remain the sole military authority in all of Hebron."

The settlers' spokesman acknowledged, however, that Mr Netanyahu had passed a point of no return. Mr Mordechai, the Defence Minister, reaffirmed during an emergency visit to Hebron that the army was ready to pull out as soon as the politicians gave the order.

Under the agreement, Israel is to hand 80-85 per cent of the city to the Palestinian Authority. It will retain control over the Jewish enclave, where 40 families live in the midst of 150,000 Arabs. Up to 20,000 Palestinian residents will remain under Israeli rule. The two immediate issues left for yesterday's projected negotiations were a Palestinian demand to share in security arrangements at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, a shrine sacred to Jews and Muslims, and the pace at which a main road running through the Jewish enclave would be reopened to Palestinian traffic. Middle East shaken, page 10

Tory threatens to bring down Major

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

A second Conservative backbench MP was last night threatening to withdraw his support from the Government, and said the general election should "come sooner rather than later" to stop the "drift" in John Major's Government.

Terry Dicks, MP for Hayes and Harlington and a former ministerial aide, told *The Independent* he would take the whip from David Trimble, the Ulster

Unionist leader, in a vote of confidence on an Ulster issue, even if it brought down the Government.

Mr Dicks is angry at Mr Major's refusal to rule out a single European currency and furious over the use of his name by "cheating" Government whips to win a vote on European fishing policy, but the crunch for him is the risk of more concessions to Sinn Fein in the Ulster talks. "We have given way all down the line. If there is a vote of no confidence, if the Ulster

Unionists don't go with [the Government] on Northern Ireland, I will take their advice on Northern Ireland, rather than the Conservative Party on that."

"I would be surprised if we don't have an election by mid-March. Some of my colleagues are saying the sooner the better... It is just drift now." Although Tony Blair has repeatedly insisted he will not bring the Government down over Northern Ireland, he gave a pledge this week to take every opportunity to force an early

election, and the Ulster Unionists' nine MPs will play a crucial role.

Mr Dicks is regarded as a maverick by Government whips, but his threat to join Sir John Gort, the Tory MP for Hendon North, who has withdrawn from the Tory whip over a local hospital row, has to be taken seriously by the Government with its majority wiped out by by-elections and defections. Mr Dicks, who is stepping down at the election, said: "I have said to the whips, they are playing

their cards close to their chest: I am going to do same."

Ministers may be forced to listen to backbench calls. On New Year's Eve, John Marshall, the Tory MP for Hendon South, wrote to the Chancellor to ask for up to £15m for hardship payments for haemophiliacs who have contracted hepatitis "C" but who are denied the compensation offered to haemophiliacs with Aids. The lack of a majority is opening ministers to ransom from backbenchers. The Prime

Minister will try to rally his troops in an interview on Sunday on BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*. It will coincide with the launch of the Tory campaign on the "folly" of Labour policies, with no let-up to the election.

John Prescott, the Labour deputy leader, was out campaigning in marginals in West Yorkshire, in spite of the snow drifts. "I am here like all Labour candidates who want to get Labour's message across. It is one that is as white as this snow, unlike the Tories."

The show goes on, but sport is frozen out

Louise Jury

The Siberian weather froze out much of the New Year's Day sporting fixtures yesterday amid predictions of more bitter cold conditions to come.

With wind chill taking temperatures down to -21C at Langdon Bay, near Dover, Kent, and most of the country shivering at -7C, even Iceland was warmer than Britain.

Frozen pitches prevented three FA Curling Premiership football games from going ahead and another 25 Nationwide League matches fell victim to the cold. Ten matches were lost in the Bell's Scottish League and rugby union and league were also hit.

In racing, which has seen 33 meetings postponed since Boxing Day, the only meeting unaffected was on the all-weather track at Lingfield.

The effect on the roads was even more alarming. The RAC repeated its warning to motorists not to make unnecessary journeys in the worst-hit rural areas including the Peak District, the Midlands, Kent, Sussex and mid-Wales. After receiving 10,000 calls on New Year's Eve, about 50 per cent more than normal, the organisation was prepared for at least as many yesterday.

Essex police reported at least 20 motorists abandoned their cars in snowdrifts while widespread snow and ice made conditions hazardous in many other parts of the country. The River Thames turned to sheet ice for several hundred yards between Pangbourne and Stratley, Berkshire. An elderly woman driver in Wales escaped when her car careered off the A458 Welshpool to Dolgellau road and was stopped from rolling into the River Banwy only by trees on the bank.



New Year's freeze: Cheerleaders try and get warm yesterday before the London Parade, in which about 8,000 people took part in sub-zero temperatures. Photograph: Andrew Bouman

But others were less fortunate. In Bristol, a 64-year-old man was killed by a car when he walked on the road to avoid slippery pavements and in Reading an elderly woman was killed when she slipped and fell in front of a car. A woman driver was killed in a car crash at South

Newington, near Banbury, Oxfordshire, and a 26-year-old man died in a head-on collision near Bath. A 17-year-old teenager who had been reported missing by his mother was found dead in a field in Rochford, Essex. Police said the death was "not suspicious".

Continuing concerns over the adequacy of cold weather social security payments prompted the Scottish Nationalist Party to table a series of parliamentary questions. The biggest casualty in soccer was the Premiership clash between Southampton and third-placed Wimbledon, which followed the Derby and Leicester games in being called off yesterday.

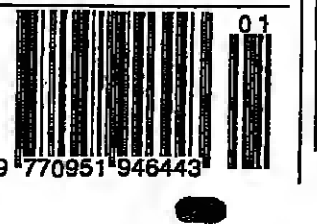
QUICKLY

IRA 'gangsters'
The Northern Ireland Secretary called the IRA "criminal gangsters" after a suspect bomb was found in Belfast. Page 2

Little readers
A third of all men have not read a book for pleasure for more than five years, according to a survey. Page 3

CONTENTS

- The Broadsheet
- Business & City 16,17
- Comment 11-15
- Foreign News 8-10
- Gazette 18
- Home News 2-7
- Leading Articles, Letters 11
- Sport 19-22
- The Tabloid
- Arts Reviews 19
- Crossword 22
- Dilemmas 10
- Education 14-17
- Film 4-7
- Listings 20,21
- TV & Radio 23,24
- Weather 22



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EDUCATING THE WHOLE PERSON IN MIND, BODY & SPIRIT

news

Mayhew dismisses IRA as criminal gangsters

David McKittrick
Ireland correspondent

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, launched a strong attack on the IRA yesterday as army experts spent the day dealing with a suspect bomb in a van in north Belfast.

Tuesday night. A telephone caller who gave a recognised IRA codeword said a landmine had been abandoned in the grounds because of security activity in the area.

In a BBC radio interview yesterday, Sir Patrick concentrated his fire on the IRA, saying that the Government had been flexible in the peace process but had had its efforts rejected. He added: "I'm afraid it demon-

strates that those who have said that the IRA are nothing but a lot of criminal gangsters, who will continue to wave the Armalite in one hand while using the ballot box in the other, were right."

The placing of the Belfast Castle device fits into the recently established pattern of the IRA attempting to carry out bomb attacks, in Belfast and elsewhere, every few days. Most

of the attempts have been abortive, for various reasons, but both republicans and the security forces predict it is only a matter of time before one of the attacks "connects" and causes casualties.

The most notorious of the IRA attacks came just before Christmas when a gunman opened fire on police officers in the corridor of children's hospital in Belfast. This caused

widespread condemnation and led to two loyalist bomb attacks.

In another incident, a well-known north Belfast republican, Eddie Copeland, was injured when a booby-trap bomb went off under his car. Another similar device was attached to a vehicle belonging to a former republican prisoner in Londonderry, but this was spotted.

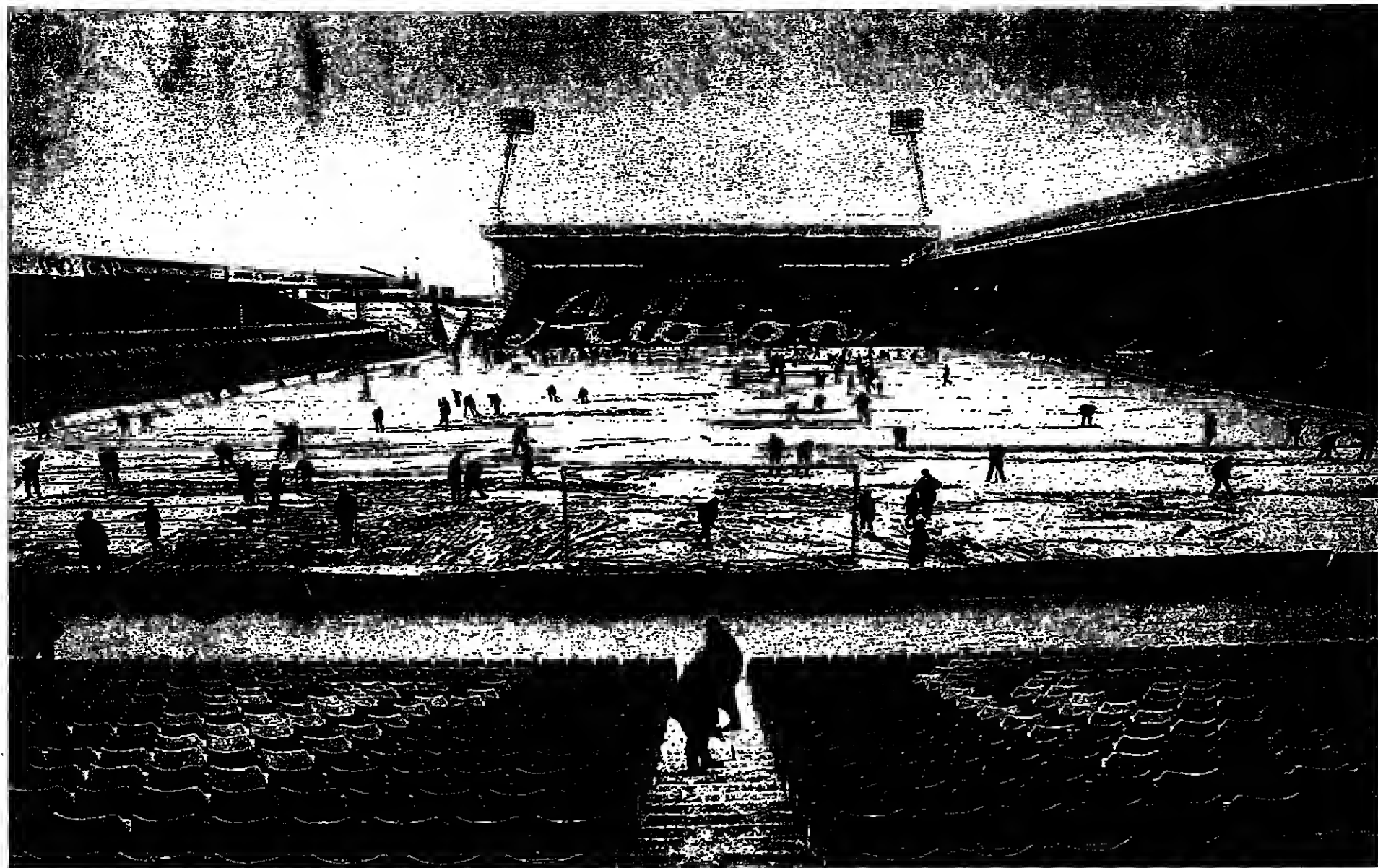
Although no organisation has openly admitted responsibility for the attacks, security sources hold the Ulster Defence Association responsible. Loyalist sources confirm this privately. In addition to the attacks, two senior republican figures, Martin McGuinness and Belfast councillor Alex Maskey, have been warned by the RUC that their lives are in danger.

Asked yesterday about loyalist violence, Sir Patrick was determinedly reticent, in contrast

to his uninhibited rhetoric against the republicans. He said he did not think the loyalist ceasefire was over, adding of the Copeland bomb attack: "I don't as yet know, and I don't think anybody as yet knows, who did that evil thing."

This is at odds with the security assessment that the UDA was undoubtedly responsible. Sir Patrick's circumspection is assumed to be related to the

Stormont political talks, in which a UDA-related group, the Ulster Democratic Party, is taking part. A clear public linkage of the bombings to the UDA would endanger the UDA's continuing involvement in the talks. The Government and most other parties are anxious to avoid the expulsion of the loyalists, which means that at present most are refraining from publicly pointing the finger.



Sporting chance: West Bromwich Albion supporters trying to make the pitch ready for yesterday's game against Tranmere. They succeeded, but West Brom lost the match. Photograph: Gavin Fogg

Giant Hogmanay cuts London down to size

Louise Jury

Thousands braved freezing temperatures to welcome the New Year in Edinburgh, where the size of the celebrations rivalled other traditional gatherings around the world.

The Scottish capital hosted the largest party in Britain with 350,000 people packing the centre of the city. This compared with crowds of 400,000 in Sydney, Australia, and 500,000 in New York. By comparison, only about 70,000 people enjoyed the traditional countdown to midnight in Trafalgar Square, London.

The Scottish celebrations were sponsored this year by McEwan's the brewers and by Richard Branson's Virgin empire. A spokeswoman for the organisers, Unique Events, said: "New York, eat your heart out!"

"The whole city is packed, and this Hogmanay is definitely going to be Edinburgh's and the world's biggest, and best. People are coming in from all over the world."

Four hundred police attended helped by 200 stewards and 21 people were arrested for minor offences, most of them alcohol-related. Edinburgh Royal Infirmary treated 322 people. A spokeswoman, Catherine Lang, said most were suffering "acute alcohol abuse" to the point of unconsciousness and there was a "fairly small" number of fractures from people who had fallen over in the snowy, slippery streets.



Animal magic: An inflatable Mighty Mouse was among attractions in the London Parade yesterday. Photograph: Philip Meech

New Year's Eve in Trafalgar Square was the coldest for almost 20 years and the number attending showed that a decline is continuing from a peak of about 120,000 five years ago. Since two women were crushed

to death in 1982, police have made efforts to keep down the number in the square. This year 18 people were taken to hospital with minor injuries and 58 people were arrested, mostly for drunken-

ness. The cold affected the chimes of Big Ben earlier in the day, causing an uneven tone. However, a thorough check-up by an engineer restored it to normal for the traditional start to the New Year.

In Birmingham there were two arrests in a crowd of 30,000. An estimated 15,000 gathered in George Square, Glasgow, for a fireworks display. The celebrations were marred in Cardiff where 18-

year-old Bilal Hussein Bhayat, from Birmingham, died at a commercial rave party. Police were carrying out drug tests.

In Cosham, Hampshire, another 18-year-old was struck on the head with an axe during a confrontation at a party. In the Irish Republic, three people suffered knife wounds in Dublin after two men burst into a party and slashed them.

Celebrations around the world sometimes proved dangerous. Four people stopped breathing and another 29 needed hospital treatment after drinking a mysterious orange herbal stimulant at a rock concert in Los Angeles, in the US.

At least 10 people died and more than 300 were injured by fireworks in road accidents or fights during festivities in the Philippines. A 35-year-old man died in Copenhagen, Denmark, after he ignited a box of fireworks and it blew up. In the centre of the Danish capital, 18 people were arrested as rioters fought with police.

Hong Kong celebrated its last New Year before the British colony reverts to Chinese control.

Its future leader, Tung Chee-hwa, said: "The new year of 1997 is different from years in the past. It marks the beginning of a new era."

The fun continued in London yesterday where a crowd of about 100,000 watched the 11th London Parade. About 8,000 people played music, twirled batons and marched.

significant shorts

Police hold man over murder

A man was due to be questioned last night about the murder of a 90-year-old man found strangled, beaten and bound in his home.

The 25-year-old from the New Brancepeth area of Co Durham was arrested on New Year's Eve by detectives hunting the killer of Wilf Mann, a retired cobbler.

His body was discovered after a neighbour and a council care worker went to investigate after hearing a noise just before 9.30am on Tuesday. They saw a man leave the back door, run through the garden and leave by the gate.

The man was wearing a distinctive turquoise-coloured hip length jacket and a grey trilby hat.

Armada sails against drugs

Skippers of small boats are being targeted by customs and police officers to spy against drug traffickers.

Yacht and motor boat owners at the London Boat show, which started yesterday, were being urged to be on the look-out for possible unauthorised landings by foreign vessels, boats out of normal shipping lanes, ships signalling ashore or being met by small craft, vessels operating at night without lights, and unusual aircraft movements.

Boy, 14, dies in stolen car

A boy, 14, died yesterday after the stolen car he was travelling in crashed while being chased by police. John Gough, of Wolverhampton, died after the crash in Walsall, West Midlands, police said.

A 19-year-old Wolverhampton man also travelling in the stolen Vauxhall Astra was injured.

Free sex blamed for rising crime

Sexual freedom, rather than poverty, is largely to blame for rising levels of crime and disorder, according to a report from the Institute of Economic Affairs yesterday.

Its author, Norman Dennis, a social scientist and Labour Party member, argues that the freedom of men "to engage in sexual intercourse without being constrained" by the pressure to become monogamous husbands or fathers is closely linked with crime.

Jobless young men and women and single mothers were partly to blame for their own low incomes because of their lifestyles, according to the report *The Invention of Permanent Poverty*.

Their situation was attributable to the breakdown of cultural mechanisms which once transmitted "messages of responsibility, striving, self-help and self-improvement".

Driven to distraction

A couple are seeking compensation after their stolen car was recovered and then stolen again while it was stored in a police compound awaiting fingerprint checks.

The Ford Orion belonged to Diane and Paul Edwards, both 26, of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, eventually turned up two days later severely damaged.

Hospital beats flu crisis

A hospital which appealed for emergency staff after more than 20 nurses were hit by flu yesterday said it had received an "excellent" response.

The Joyce Green Hospital in Dartford, Kent, was back to full staff after the appeal on local radio.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Why employers put accent on manner of speech

Louise Jury

The Scouser and Brummie who believe the world is prejudiced against them because of their accent may be right.

People with strong regional accents are often discriminated against at work or when applying for jobs, according to a survey of recruitment specialists.

Some members of the Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD) advised anyone wanting to get on in life to adjust their vowels as necessary.

"I would advise anyone with a 'redbrick' or industrial accent to upgrade. Politicians and lawyers do it so why shouldn't others?" said one London-based recruitment consultant.

"Accent" communicates background, education and birthplace and, frankly, some backgrounds are more marketable than others.

Accents were seen as important by many employers and people with strong regional or working-class accents were most likely to suffer discrimination, the IPD members said.

Companies took accents seriously because they could project an organisation's image. An

institute spokesman said: "People in front-house positions, from telephoneists to account managers, are therefore expected to speak as well as dress, in a particular way."

Some of the consultants were more direct. "Let's face it, people with a Scouse accent sound whiny and people with a Brummie accent sound stupid," said one.

The Glasgow accent, along with those of Liverpool and Birmingham, also figured in the "negative" category.

However, cut-glass English was not always at an advantage. In Scotland, an upper-class English accent "positively induces hostility," according to the chief executive of one recruitment firm.

A Dorset woman questioned for the survey said she had no idea how strong the attitude to accents was until she moved to London. "As soon as I opened my mouth, people would be queuing up to do *Worzel Gummidge* imitations," she said.

"A lot of people seem to think that if you speak with a Dorset accent, you were thick and educated. Some would slow down or speak to when they were talking to

Colliery deal to cut school heating bills

Tony Heath

A consortium of Welsh local councils is poised to sign a contract with the resurgent Tower Colliery that will spare thousands of pounds from heating bills in schools, libraries, old people's homes and town halls.

The deal with the colliery, near Aberdare, comes on the second anniversary of the workers' takeover of the pit which was saved from closure when 240 men each chipped in £8,000 redundancy money to run it as a co-operative.

Because the colliery can sell its coal substantially cheaper than gas, the heating bills of eight councils will fall by up to 25 per cent over the next two years. Just over 100 buildings will be supplied with Tower coal - a step towards increasing the colliery's sales to public service customers, many of whom switched to gas in the wake of

the 1984-85 miners' strike. Tyrone O'Sullivan, formerly the National Union Mineworkers lodge secretary at Tower and now a director of the co-operative, said: "One of our aims is to re-establish coal as a credible alternative fuel."

Tower, the sole surviving deep mine in Wales turned in a profit of £4m on a £2.2m turnover in its second year of operations, an achievement celebrated with a £500 per head Christmas bonus and a 5 per cent pay rise. Since the miners took over from British Coal on 2 January 1995, production has averaged more than 8,000 tons a week.

With male unemployment in the Aberdare district at 21 per cent, Tower plays a vital part in sustaining the local economy. The pit has even taken on extra men, including teenage apprentices - a traditional route to work that pessimists claimed had been consigned to history.

Minister accuses bishops of degrading moral campaign

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

A government minister yesterday accused five bishops of "degrading" the campaign for moral revival by Frances Lawrence, the widow of the murdered London breadmaster Philip Lawrence.

Ms Widdicombe, a Home Office minister who was made a privy councillor in the New Year Honours, angrily responded to the claims by the five Church of England bishops that the Government had failed to give a moral lead.

Ms Widdicombe attacked the bishops after New Year's messages in which they criticised Thatcherism for encouraging individualism, at the expense of community spirit. She said: "I don't believe Frances Lawrence

would want her important message degraded in that way."

The fact is that Tony Blair offers more unemployment with his policy of joining the Social Chapter and what do the bishops have to say about that?

"Responsibility on the part of the individual is not just discharged by paying over more taxes to the state."

"It sounds to me as if the bishops should be encouraging people to vote Conservative if they are really concerned about personal responsibility."

Another right-winger, the Conservative MP and former Minister Ray Whitney accused the bishops of "bias and want of logic".

The Bishop of Oxford, rightly calls for a renewal of personal responsibility yet condemns the Conservative emphasis on personal morality. He seeks to justify this paradox by alleging that the Government "wishes to resist fundamental economic and political changes that threaten the privileged position of its supporters."

He does not specify the changes he has in mind but no doubt higher taxes and increased public control of the economy would feature prominently. These were precisely the policies which impoverished Britain in the Sixties and Seventies.

The Bishop of Oxford, the

Right Rev Richard Harries, one of the most outspoken bishops, appeared to offer Tony Blair an endorsement for guiding the Labour Party back to its moral roots.

He said it offered the likelihood of a government which would emphasise "changing the conditions which depress and degrade the lives of so many of our fellow citizens."

Bishop Harries echoed Mrs Lawrence by saying people wanted a renewal of personal responsibility and a quest for decency after being "sickened by so much of what is going on in our society".

The Right Rev David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool, said there was a national fatalism which was sapping the will to tackle mass unemployment and "humiliatingly low pay".

Leading article, page 11

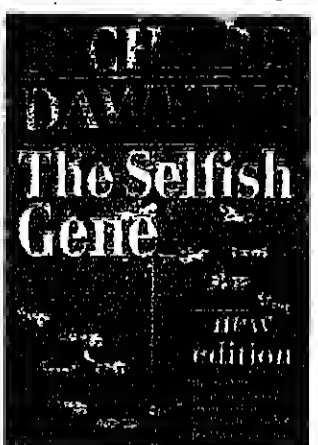
The joy of reading leaves men on the shelf

Marianne Macdonald and Michael Streeter

When it comes to reading habits, women are chapters ahead of men, a survey reveals today.

The study of what Britons read – and when – found that 35 per cent of men had not read a book for pleasure for five years or more, compared to only one in five women.

The Book Marketing Ltd survey also reveals that while 47 per cent of women claimed to have finished a book in the previous fortnight, only 30 per



A trophy: Dawkins's work may be for the bookcase

cent of men could say the same. Reading habits differ markedly with age, according to the survey, reported in the latest issue of *Cultural Trends*, from the Policy Studies Institute. While only 18 per cent of those aged 15 to 24 had read a book in the week before they were questioned, the figure for people aged between 25 and 34 was 21 per cent, and 41 per cent for those over 55.

Cookery books, with Delia Smith's many titles such as *Winter Collection* and other books linked to television series

to the fore, are the most popular type of book bought, although romantic fiction and puzzle books have the biggest volume of sales.

In 1995, for example, culinary titles were bought by 21 per cent of those who purchased a book compared to 18 per cent who bought a crime story or thriller, 12 per cent who bought a romantic novel and 7 per cent who bought a work of 20th-century fiction.

A quick look around London book stores yesterday bore out some of the findings, with a range of cooking books, romantic works and thrillers among the most popular.

Among those most prominently displayed were the Jeffrey Archer blockbuster, *The Fourth Estate*, Jackie Collins's *Vendetta: Lucky's Revenge*, Dick Francis's latest best-seller *Come to Grief* and an array of titles by the horror writer Stephen King and the thriller expert John Grisham.

However, there was good news for those who prefer more high-brow reads. Richard Green, manager of Dillons book store in Trafalgar Square, said that unlike some earlier Booker Prize winners, Graham Swift's *Last Orders* had been doing well. "It is a readable book and sold very well at Christmas," he said.

Also selling well are "trophy" books such as Richard Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene*, titles which look good on the bookcase but which tend to be more purchased than read.

The finding that women are greater readers than men was supported by a quick survey of book buyers by *The Independent*.

"I think it's because women are continually trying to change and improve themselves, and are more flexible and open to new experiences," Liz Kay, a curator at the Tate Gallery, said.

Tamsin Summerson, 22, said she was aware of the difference among her friends. "If you ask a man what book they've just read they're likely to have forgotten or they will change the subject. With a woman you're more likely to get into a lengthy discussion about it."

But whichever sex you are, it

is getting harder to be well-read. The number of books published has risen steadily since 1987. Then, just under 55,000 were published, compared to just over 95,000 in 1995.

Book prices have risen from an average of £7.93 for a novel in the first half of 1991 to £8.99 in the second half of

1995. Consumer spending on books has jumped, from £755m in 1985 to £1.673m in 1994.

More than half the population – 55 per cent – use libraries to borrow books, while a further 15 per cent make use of their own services, such as their music libraries, computers, references books, or newspapers.

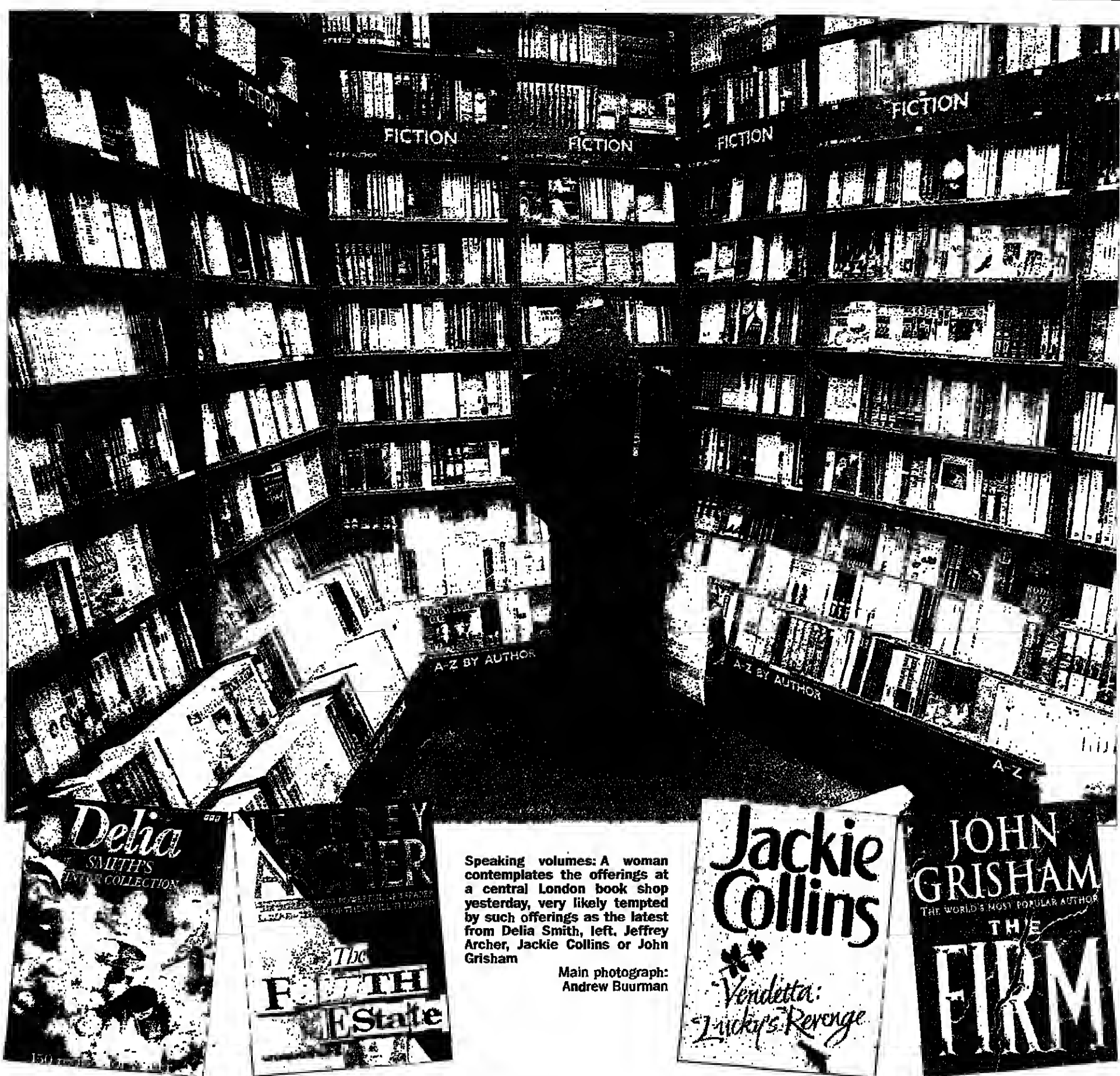
But book stock in libraries is declining: in 1987 there were 24 books per head of population in England and Wales, compared with 2.18 in 1994. Expenditure by the Department of National Heritage on libraries was cut by 13.5 per cent between 1992 and 1993.

The survey found that al-

though nearly 30 per cent of households had a computer, only 7 per cent of the population had a multi-media capacity necessary to run CD-ROMs, the computer rival to books.

Of those that did, 69 per cent used it for work and 50 per cent for game-playing, but only 24 per cent used CD-ROMs for

reference and 22 per cent for education. "New media are still no match for the book and new technology has not yet made any impact on people's reading habits," Rachel Dunlop, PSI research fellow, said. But she said the picture might change as books became more expensive and CD-ROMs cheaper.



Speaking volumes: A woman contemplates the offerings at a central London book shop yesterday, very likely tempted by such offerings as the latest from Delia Smith, left, Jeffrey Archer, Jackie Collins or John Grisham

Main photograph: Andrew Buurman

New crackdown on shops that sell aphrodisiac drug

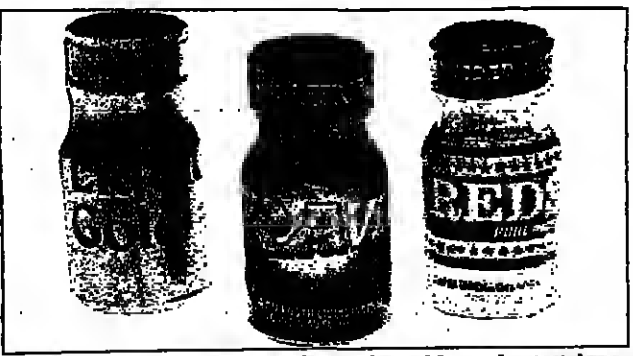
Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

The widely available aphrodisiac drug known as poppers faces a nationwide ban following a successful court case and new clampdown by officials.

Shopowners can now be prosecuted for selling poppers – which are particularly popular with gay men – and the Department of Health is considering tightening the restrictions on their availability.

This follows a campaign by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) which argues that the chemical in poppers can kill and may be linked to a type of cancer that people with HIV sometimes develop.

The drug, which costs about £4 for a small bottle containing chemicals amyl, butyl or isobutyl nitrite. The side effects of inhaling it include a euphoric rush, enhanced orgasm, and the relaxation of the bowel muscles. Poppers are avail-



Spoilt for choice: The drug is marketed in various guises

able from sex shops as well as via mail order.

In June, the RPS made an important, and at the time unnoticed, break-through when it prosecuted a sex shop in Camden, north London, under the Medicines Act, the RPS believes the ruling effectively means that all poppers are outlawed.

Since then the society has been working with police forces and local authorities throughout Britain, including London, Blackpool and Edinburgh, in an

attempt to stamp out the sale of poppers.

They have visited a number of sex shops and threatened to prosecute them if they continue to sell the drug.

Steve Lutener, the head of the Inspectorate and Enforcement Division of the RPS, said: "The prosecution is an important test case."

"We are now trying to educate people about the dangers and are dealing with complaints from the public."

"We have been visiting and sending letters to shops saying if they don't stop selling poppers we will take them to court."

He said that a least one person had died from the effects of the chemicals, which prevented the blood from carrying oxygen.

And he added that poppers may also be linked to the development of one of the early stages of full-blown AIDS, the skin cancer Kaposi's sarcoma. As well as gay men, the drug is



Duff trade: Shops that sell poppers are being warned that they face prosecution

Photographs: David Rose

also taken by teenagers. A survey of 752 pupils at schools in 1992 in Greater Manchester and Merseyside found that 22 per cent had taken poppers by the age of 16.

Meanwhile, the Medicines Control Agency, a Department of Health enforcement team, is investigating the manufacture and importation of the drug. A Department of Health

spokeswoman said: "We are looking at how we can enforce the law more stringently."

"One of the reasons that shops still sell it is that our enforcement team is very small

and often if supplies are seized they are replaced in a few days."

She added that the agency only acted in response to complaints from the public.

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news

Labour at odds over power to make policy

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Labour front bench spokesmen last night said there would be a return to the "turmoil of the 1980s" if the Labour leadership endorsed reforms which could in effect abolish constituency parties and cut the party's union links.

Centre-left Tribune MPs are planning to put forward al-

ternative reforms which would reduce the number of seats for Tony Blair's key Cabinet ministers on the party's ruling executive, if Labour won office, and replace them with more grass roots supporters, including council leaders.

One Labour left-wing source said they have the backing of John Prescott, the deputy leader, and Robin Cook, and they would fight the proposals

put forward by the right-wing Labour Co-ordinating Committee for a review of the party machinery in government under Tom Sawyer, the general secretary of the party.

The source said the LCC's plans disclosed yesterday in *The Independent* were "highly centralised and elitist". "What the inside-Left is arguing for, which is completely different to the LCC, is that there should be a

positive partnership between the leadership and its grass roots supporters. There should be participatory democracy within the party rather than plebiscite," the source added.

"The LCC agenda whereby local parties are effectively abolished would mean local party members would become appendages of the national leadership.

"That cannot work and would lead to the same prob-

lems we had in the 1970s and the turmoil of the 1980s. What we need is a relationship of trust with the leadership where individual party members can be positively involved."

Derek Fatchett and Peter Hain, two Labour front bench spokesmen, will publish alternative plans under the left-wing *Tribune* newspaper. They will propose keeping union involvement at all levels of the

party, and keeping the party conference as a policy-making forum. The left wing want to give more influence to the policy forums, which already exist, to deliver policy changes.

Under the LCC plans, which have the ear of the leadership, the conference would become a "public relations rally", said the source. The *Tribune* document, *A Stakeholder Party*, will argue the conference should be

reformed, to allow the first two days to be devoted to policy forums.

Constituencies would still send delegates to the conference, and they would retain voting powers. The NEC would remain the policy-making body between conferences, with a final decision over the manifesto, but the left want to reduce the number of seats for sitting members of the Cabinet on the NEC.

The LCC is proposing that the NEC should no longer make policy. Unions and other affiliated groups would lose their direct links in the constituencies. General management committees, which at present send resolutions and delegates to the annual conference, would be replaced by a small executive, and grass roots decisions would be taken by one-member-one-vote ballots.

River slowly winds its way back to life

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

Richard Morris is hoping for a re-run of the fabled winter of 1947, though it is not so much the several feet of snow he wants as the floods that would inevitably follow.

The melt water would be the ideal natural ally in the restoration of a 1.5-mile stretch of the River Cole, a tributary of the Thames on the Oxfordshire-Wiltshire border.

Transformation of the river, on the National Trust's Coleshill estate, is already well underway. It is barely recognisable from the "dreary trickle" in the bottom of a drainage ditch familiar to Mr Morris, the estate land agent.

At a cost of £250,000, shared by the European Union and the Environment Agency, the Cole has been re-engineered, introducing meanders and loops, shallows, undercut banks and gravel riffles. The aim is to restore the river to a natural winding course destroyed by canalisation in the 1970s.

Flooding will be allowed on adjacent fields to provide the wet ground necessary for feeding waders such as curlew and redshank. A five-acre reed bed where knapweed and purple-flowered snake's head fritillary still grow will be extended over 20 acres of former arable land.

Elsewhere on the 100 acres of flood plain, silage fields will be managed without fertilizers and the grass



Free flowing: Conservation work on the river Cole has revived its meanders and helped re-establish water plants and wildlife

Photograph: David Rose

cut later in the summer to allow birds to nest successfully.

"It's been a long haul since the planning stage but now it is starting to look superb," Mr Morris said. "The meanders are back in the river, young willows and water plants are getting established, we have

seen the first snipe for a long time and there seem to be more kingfishers. People who walk here in the spring will see the last scars of the construction, but they will also see dace and chub holding themselves in the current. And you can hear the river flowing over the gravel rather

than it sulked in the bottom of a ditch."

A further £100,000, from the same sources, will go towards an extensive scientific monitoring programme by Pond Action of Oxford Brookes University.

The Cole is one of two schemes

covered by the River Restoration Project. English Nature and the Countryside Commission are among the partners. The other scheme is an urban site on the River Skerne, near Darlington.

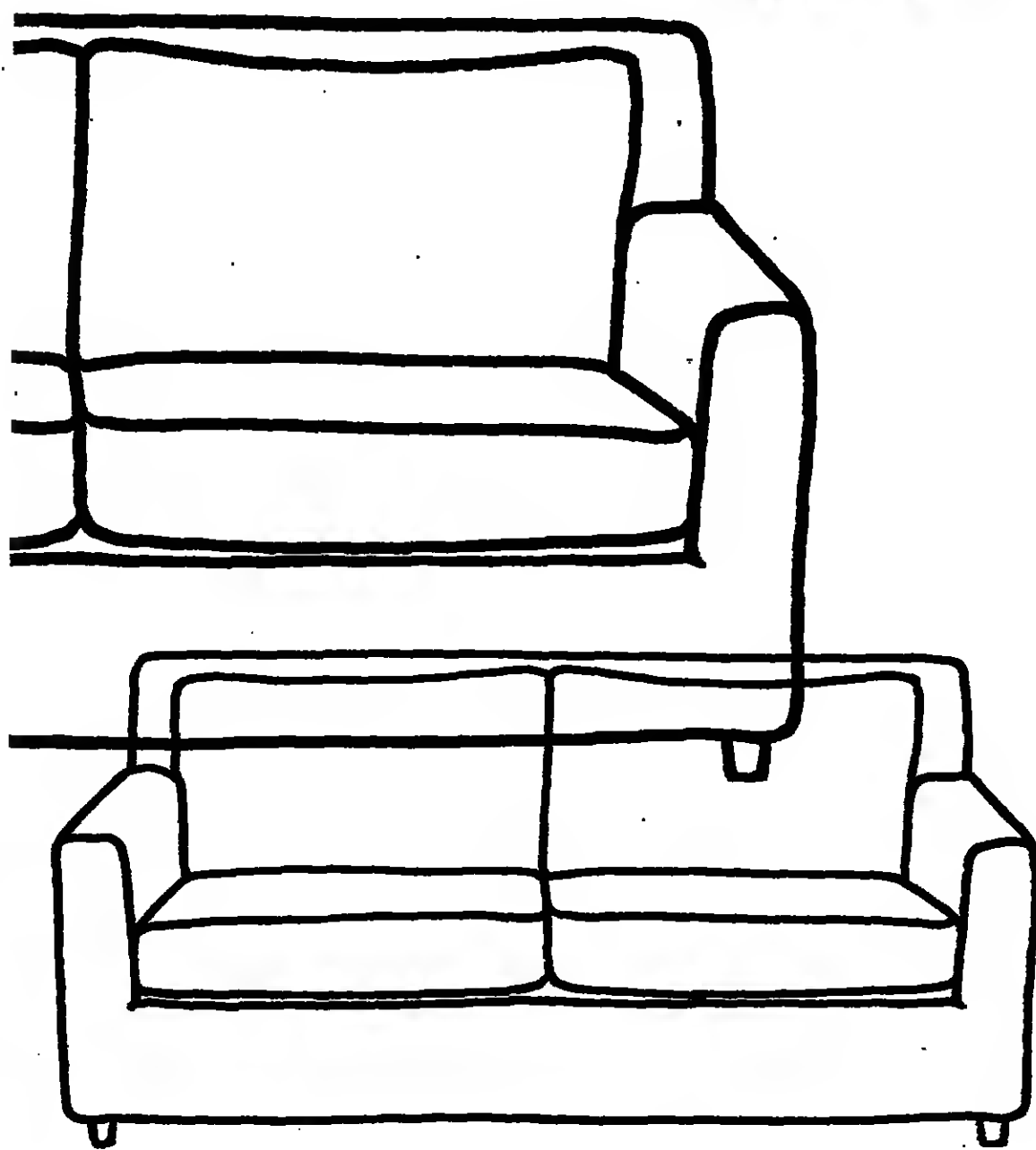
Ninety-five per cent of the country's rivers have had their flows,

wildlife and vegetation altered by drainage, agriculture and the taming hand of man. The Cole is known as a "flashy" river because of the sudden rushes of rainwater off the tarmac and concrete of the Swindon area.

Mr Morris hopes careful moni-

toring will demonstrate that rivers and their settings can be restored and plants and wildlife re-established. It will be decades before the hay meadows are back to their full flower-rich glory but it may not be long before the otter is back beneath the willows of Coleshill.

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Ireland jails farmers using illegal growth promoters

Alan Murdoch
Dublin

Rogue Irish farmers who go for a quick buck by feeding illegal growth promoters to cattle are being hammered with jail terms under a tough drive by Dublin to protect lucrative beef exports hard hit by BSE scares.

Four farmers and a vet are facing jail and more than 100 other cases are due before the courts in the crackdown. One judge told one farmer he was "worse than a terrorist" while another likened a vet who admitted keeping illegal growth promoters to a drug dealer.

More cases are under investigation by teams of Department of Agriculture inspectors as Ireland seeks to defend its image as a producer of quality, grass-fed beef.

The prosecutions, delayed temporarily by a legal challenge brought by a meat company executive, are coming before courts across the country. Besides those jailed, others have received heavy fines.

Clenbuterol has been used for years by farmers in feed-stuffs, often diluted in milk powder, to achieve higher earnings by raising the proportion of lean meat to fat in beef cattle.

First developed as a remedy for respiratory problems in horses, the drug can induce fatal heart attacks in humans if inhaled in concentrated form.

The harsh penalties appear to be working as a deterrent. Investigators say detected abuse on Ireland's 170,000 farms has fallen amid the publicity about recent court verdicts. Farmers caught using illegal drugs are

also having EU bovine headage payments blocked.

The tough measures are being applied as Ireland seeks to recover from the damage to its huge meat trade inflicted by consumer alarm over the BSE.

Ireland exports 87 per cent of its IR£1.7bn beef output and is more dependent on the sector than any other European Union state. Dublin already faces a high bill for the border policing operation to prevent BSE-infected animals crossing the border from Northern Ireland.

"Operation Matador" hundreds of extra gardai are operating border check-points to block illegal cattle movements.

Although infection levels are tiny by British standards, the 66 BSE cases detected this year in the Irish Republic compare with only 16 in 1995.

Several farmers in the southern Munster region are being investigated amid suspicion that they deliberately introduced BSE-infected animals in order to claim market-value compensation for their entire herds.

To restore consumer confidence, Dublin has introduced a computerised cattle-tracing system which registers the movement of every beef animal in the 7-million-strong national herd.

This and re-introduction of EU intervention purchasing to assist farmers while demand for beef declines will cost Dublin an extra £80m next year, according to official estimates.

A Food Safety Board with legal powers was recently created by the Department of Health, while Agriculture minister Dean Yates has allocated IR£5m for research into BSE.

Biographer to reveal secrets of West brother's role in killings

More sensational revelations are to be published about the secret life of John West, the "gentle giant" brother of the serial killer Fred West, it emerged yesterday.

They will be in a new final chapter of *An Evil Love*, Geoffrey Wansell's official biography of Fred West, a self-confessed murderer, which will be published in paperback in the spring.

John West, a retired dustman, hanged himself in the garage of his Gloucester home on 28 November, the day before the jury at Bristol Crown Court was to be sent out to consider allegations that he raped his niece Anne Marie West about 300 times over several years at the family's Gloucester home.

It was a suicide which mirrored that of his brother. Fred West hanged himself in his remand cell at Birmingham Prison on New Year's Day 1995, while awaiting trial on 12 charges of murder.

The new chapter in the paperback edition of the Fred West biography will disclose new details of the brothers'



John West (left) and his brother's biographer Geoffrey Wansell

close relationship and of John's relationship with Fred's wife, the jailed serial killer Rosemary West. Mr Wansell has already said in the hardback edition of Fred West's life how the builder claimed that John was involved "a lot" in the kidnappings and killings which took place at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester.

Fred West also claimed that it was his brother John and his

first wife, Rena Costello, who killed his lover and family nanny Ann McFall, 18, and that for some years his second wife, Rosemary - now serving life for 10 murders - and his brother had had a sexual relationship.

At his trial John West denied a specimen rape charge involving Anne Marie West, and another single rape charge concerning a girl who cannot be

named for legal reasons. It emerged during the trial that John West had admitted having had sex with Rosemary West on several occasions.

Mr Wansell was commissioned to write the biography of Fred West for the Official Solicitor. The bulk of the royalties will go to Fred West's estate for the benefit of the younger children of his family.

The author was given unprecedented access to personal belongings, documentary and video material concerning the prosecution of Fred West. He also attended John West's rape trial. But the process prevented him from making disclosures concerning John West while he was unconvicted and alive.

Mr Wansell yesterday declined to give details of his revelations concerning John West in the final 12,000-word chapter of the revised paperback biography. But he disclosed: "I shall be revealing the extent that John West knew about his brother's activities over the past years and how much of a partnership he shared with his brother."

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Making up: Juliana Braithwaite, a volunteer at Keyworth primary in Southwark, south London, preparing a pupil for Grease

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

How the best of British youth could change the face of our public services

Louise Jury

Many schools, hospitals and communities could be transformed this year by a rapid expansion in the numbers of young people voluntarily giving their time to help them.

The Conservatives have pledged that by the end of 1997, everyone between the ages of 15 and 25 who wants to volunteer should be able to. Last month, the Government gave £3m to fund local "volunteer facilitators".

Even if they lose the election, the initiative will continue as Labour has announced plans to have 100,000 young people involved in "citizens' service" by the millennium. The Liberal Democrats gave their backing to the idea some time ago.

Elisabeth Hoodless, executive director of the charity Community Service Volunteers, said yesterday that volunteering was an idea whose time has come.

To show how the politicians' pledges can be put into practice, the charity has just completed the first 12 months of pilot projects.

In Cardiff, Sunderland and the London borough of Southwark, around 150 young people have been helping in schools, restoring gardens and calming waiting-room nerves in hospitals.

Mrs Hoodless said: "What has been remarkable in the projects is the joy with which professionals have welcomed young people to help raise reading levels, or calm waiting areas in hospitals or care for people with learning difficulties."

A problem with volunteers in the past was a reputation for unreliability, but good organisation had overcome that. "I think we've made a real breakthrough," she said.

In Southwark primary school in Southwark, south London, Juliana Braithwaite applied mascara to the eyes of Emily Turner, 10, as her classmates

babbled excitedly, preparing to perform the musical *Grease*.

Ms Braithwaite, 25, has just been taken on to work 10 hours a week at the school after proving a dedicated volunteer with the Southwark pilot project. She is still giving her own time in the afternoons while she waits to take a bachelor of education course next September.

"I've always been interested in teaching and thought it would be a good idea to get to know a bit more about the needs of young children. It's helped me to decide if this is the sort of career I really want to go into."

She believed many young people could benefit, but not if the idea becomes just another government scheme. "This should be seen as a valuable thing," she said.

Christina Albrecht, the head teacher, agreed. "It makes tons of difference to the school. It enables all the extra bits to happen. We managed before but we couldn't do as much. We've had more trips in this last term than in all the 10 years I've been head."

One of the teachers, Andrea Innes, said she could see literacy levels rising in her classroom as the children received more attention. Her colleague Kim Hindocha teaches one child who had never used the past tense because it was not used at home. He is beginning to now. "A volunteer can make gentle reminders in a way that as a teacher with 30 children you cannot," she said.

Similar success stories are claimed for the projects in Cardiff and Sunderland which were developed to show how citizen's service could be organised, ensuring a prototype is in place for expansion, whoever wins the election.

Elisabeth Hoodless said: "What we're talking about is young people as a matter of choice giving a period of service to the communities they live in which is good for them and good for the community."

Saudi lawyer in death penalty plea to family

Michael Streeter

The Saudi lawyer representing the two British nurses charged with murdering a colleague is to make a public appeal to the dead woman's family not to press for the death penalty if they are convicted of murder.

Salah Hejailan said that if Yvonne Gilford's relatives agreed then the accused pair could escape with three or four years' jail - possibly suspended.

Mr Hejailan, who will visit Deborah Parry and Lucille McLachlan in jail for the first time on Saturday, said that if the victim's family declared they did not want the ultimate sanction this would rule out capital punishment.

Speaking from the Saudi capital Riyadh, he told *The Independent*: "Everything depends on the family of the dead woman. The judge would not even consider capital punishment unless it was asked for by relatives."

He would be seeking the assurance from the Gilford family in writing, he said, which could mean the entire case being dealt with inside a few weeks.

It would be "shocking", and not a little ironic, said Mr Hejailan, for a Western family to urge the death penalty at a time of unbalanced criticism of the

Saudi justice system. The Saudi insistence on taking into account a victim's views was a positive factor, he said.

The dead woman's brother Frank Gilford, speaking from his home in Sydney, Australia, hinted at the weekend that the family might not ask for execution for her alleged killers.

Mr Hejailan added he was aware of reports that at least one of the two accused, Ms Parry, 41, from the Midlands, had withdrawn an alleged confession, but he said he was unable to comment in detail on the strength of their defence until he met them.

Saudi newspapers have quoted police sources as saying the three women, who worked together at the King Fahd Military Medical Complex in Dhahran, had rowed before the killing, with the two Britons allegedly taunting the 55-year-old Australian over her age.

The same sources claim that the two women were caught after police discovered that money was going missing from the dead woman's bank account and followed them to a cash dispensing machine.

The women were visited on Monday by the British consul, Tim Lamb, who said they were in "good health" but naturally very concerned about the murder charges.

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Snap: Cameras hidden in a vanity case (right) and in binoculars will be auctioned by Christie's on 17 January. Photographs: Adrian Dennis

Private passion saves secret history of the spy camera

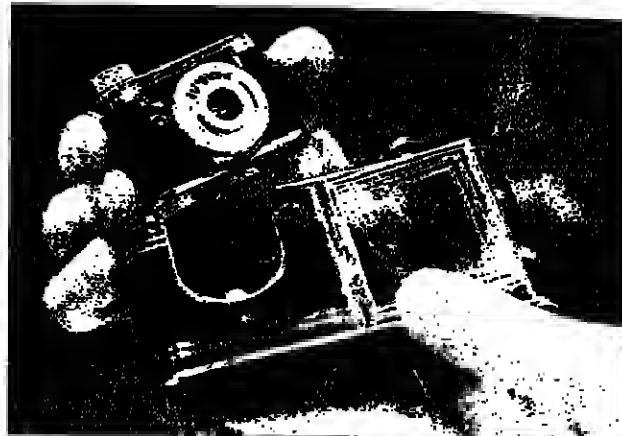
Marianne Macdonald
Arts Correspondent

When James Bond casually produces an item from his mind-boggling array of gadgets, the inevitable assumption is that they owe more to the future than the past.

But an unusual auction sale later this month reveals that spy cameras, at least, have been around for more than a century and come in an extraordinary variety of secret guises.

The examples to go on sale at Christie's, South Kensington, in west London, were gathered by an anonymous French collector, whose quirk was to find as many examples as possible, dating from the Victorians, of the trend for concealed cameras.

These were designed for both men and women – erring husbands may well have been at the wrong end of their concealed lenses – and now command prices up to tens of thousands of pounds.



A popular type was the camera gun. Many of these models, which started in the 1850s, were unconvincing in terms of disguise – Christie's is selling an Erac gun camera consisting merely of a grip without the barrel – but they did have the advantage of reducing blurring.

One of the better varieties is included in the sale on 17 January: the Japanese Toko Kogaku, which offers a sight and

dummy magazine and is estimated at £400 to £600. If a gun seems a little crude, aspiring spies should consider the watch camera. Christie's is offering the Steineck ABC made in 1948 by Dr R. Steiner, a prolific German inventor who was a notoriously bad businessman when it came to marketing his designs.

His Steineck ABC – estimated at up to £1,200 with its original box – is considered one of

the best of its kind although only the unobservant would have been fooled. A small lens pokes out where the XII should be, while a button at six o'clock activates the camera.

Women might prefer the photo-vanity set from Ansco Photo Products of Binghamton, New York. Estimated at up to £1,400, this black vanity case is fitted with a hidden camera, comb, mirror and make-up set. It takes snaps through a small opening under the carry-strap.

Other gadgets include the notebook camera complete with pen (up to £140), the cigarette box camera (four "brands" including Marlboro: up to £140), or the lighter camera, with its Zippo-style case (up to £150).

Last but not least is Bloch's remarkably unconvincing 1890 photo-cravat camera, the size of a spectacle case. Designed to fit inside a cravat with its lens poking from the position usually taken by the pin, this will command the highest price of all, likely to be as much as £18,000.

Labour may scrap primary tables

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

National primary school league tables could be scrapped in favour of local tables under a Labour government.

The shadow Education Secretary, David Blunkett, said yesterday that a final decision would be made after the first performance tables for 11-year-olds are published in March. But he is understood to be convinced parents would be better served by tables giving information on schools in their local area than by a mass of national data.

The first tables will provide information on the curriculum test results of more than 14,000 primary and middle schools in England.

The Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, yesterday claimed Labour had "let the cat out of the bag" over its views on schools' accountability. The party had made it clear it would deny parents wider information on primary school performance.

Mr Blunkett said Labour would review the Government's tables "to see whether they are the most efficient and helpful way of providing information to parents and lifting standards in primary schools".

He went on: "We would need to be persuaded by parents that information on how other schools many miles away are doing would be of value to them – or that the £2m it would cost could not be better spent helping their school in a more direct way." He was referring to the £1.3m estimated cost of producing the tables and Labour would want to examine whether this was a worthwhile use of resources.

As an alternative to national tables Labour would require education authorities to compile data on schools in their areas,

allowing parents to compare performances locally and against a national average.

Mr Blunkett also wants authorities to provide information for parents on how schools add value, comparing performance at the age of 11 with assessment of pupils on entry at five.

Labour have said it would retain secondary school league tables, introduced six years ago, though it wants more value-added information as well as public examination results.

Mr Blunkett's stance opens a clear policy rift with the Government, which says national comparisons are as important at primary as at secondary school level, and the key to raising standards.

The Government's primary tables will show the proportion of pupils in each school in England who reach national target standards in English, maths and science. They include teacher assessments of pupils as well as the results of tests taken by 600,000 11-year-olds last May.

Mrs Shephard provoked a boycott of the tests for 11-year-olds by teaching unions last year when she went back on a promise to delay publication of results until the tests had "bedded down". The move was widely seen as a concession to her party's right wing. She justified her U-turn by pointing to the poor results achieved in tests the previous year, when more than half of 11-year-olds failed to reach expected standards in maths and English.

The general election could disrupt preparations for publication which are already well under way. In the event of a poll before March, the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin Butler, and the education permanent secretary, Michael Richard, would decide whether civil servants would stop work on the tables.

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DAILY POEM

H.

Ciaran Carson

The Powers-that-Be decreed that from the ____ of the sausage rolls, for reasons Of security, would be contracted to a different firm. They gave the prisoners no reasons.

The prisoners complained. We cannot reproduce his actual words here, since their spokesman is alleged To be a sub-commander of a movement deemed to be illegal.

An actor spoke for him in almost-perfect lip-synch: It's not the quality We're giving off about. Just that it seems they're getting smaller. We're talking quantity.

His "Belfast" accent wasn't West enough. Is the H in H-Block aitch or haich? Does it matter? What we have we hold? Our day will come? Give or take an inch?

Well, give an inch and someone takes an effing mile. Everything is in the ways them. Like, the prison that we call Long Kesh is to the Powers-that-Be The Maze.

Today's selection from the TS Eliot Prize shortlist forms part of Ciaran Carson's "Letters of the Alphabet" sequence, in his book *Opera et Cetera* (Bloodaxe). Carson, who is Literature and Traditional Arts Officer with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, won the Prize in 1993 for his collection *First Language*.

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international

Chirac honours Johnny and forgives France

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

President Jacques Chirac may have no pressing need to court the voters – parliamentary elections are more than a year away and his own job is safe for five years – but the message of his New Year address to the nation and his New Year's honours list could have come from the same school of seasonal PR as John Major's. Tell the punters what they want to hear, the advice seems to have been, and give them plenty of what we know they like.

The result in Mr Chirac's case was some extravagant stroking of the Frenchman's delicate ego and a coagulation of new and promoted members of the Legion d'Honneur littered with household names of a certain age.

Heading yesterday's news was the latest honour for Johnny Hallyday, the superannated French-language rock star (almost the only one). There, too, was Sacha Distel (remember him?), the graciously-grown-old balladist of yesteryear, and the veteran fashion designer Pierre Cardin.

One of those whose couture house has so far escaped the clutches of the *enfants terribles* from London.

There was a sprinkling of "achieving" women – France's first woman in space, Claudie André-Deshays, and the recently appointed female head of France's equivalent of the CID, Martine Monteil, among them – but there were also yards of establishment names, headed by one familiar from the distant past, the former prime minister, Maurice Couve de Murville.

For his 11-minute address on New Year's eve Mr Chirac was looking, somehow, especially Gallic. He was suddenly one of "us", the French, rather than one of "them", those light-suited "Anglo-Saxons" whose easy, laid-back ways he often imitates on television.

The tricolour returned to the prominence of his first presidential broadcast, almost edging out the European flag, and he uttered the words "France" or "French" 16 times. Europe, which had a starring role in his previous appearance three weeks ago, scored a mere three mentions.

Most astonishing, though, was Mr Chirac's reassessment of his compatriots. Three weeks ago, in what was his first presidential broadcast for six months, he had described them as "conservatives", stubbornly resistant to any sort of change, and effectively blamed them for the parlous state of the country. He had also cast aspersions on much of government policy.

After a storm of criticism from the pundits about his attitude – "as though he was a spectator of his own government", said one – Mr Chirac had decided that his fellow-countrymen were doing pretty well. "France is changing, France is modernising itself, the French are mobilising," he insisted. "Beyond the conservatism... that exists here and there, I see evidence of dynamism and vitality."

He had even decided that they were all in this together, "advancing together on the path of our joint ambitions". One of France's senior political commentators described the message as "basically a correction of his last broadcast". The French and their president, it seems, go into 1997 all square.



Taking the plunge: Giuseppe Palmulli keeping up a 50-year tradition by diving into the Tiber River in Rome yesterday. He and two others jumped off the Cavour Bridge after first sprinkling wine into the river
Photograph: Paolo Cocco/Reuters

America acts to safeguard its national parks

David Usborne
New York

The new year is promising to bring some respite to America's chronically overused national park system with sharp increases in visitor entrance fees and the promise of other measures to curb human intrusion – particularly of the mechanised kind in cars and aircraft.

Bruce Babbitt, the US Secretary of the Interior, marked the start of 1997 by announcing stricter limits on aircraft overflying the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Under the new rules, aeroplane and helicopter tours will be outlawed in 80 per cent of the airspace over the canyon, compared with 40 per cent previously. In the summer months, all flying will be barred before 8 am and after 6 pm.

The new controls are designed, however, as only the first phase in a longer-term plan to reverse the encroachments of all private vehicles in the canyon and other popular parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite. At the canyon, for example, proposals already approved will eventually force visitors to leave their cars outside the park and take shuttle buses to points inside.

"At peak periods of summer overflights, the south rim of the Grand Canyon is noisier than Times Square on New Year's Eve," Mr Babbitt said as he announced the flight limits. Underlining the dawn and dusk

plane curfew, he added: "These are the truly magical hours in the Grand Canyon".

The entire park system, meanwhile, should be considerably fortified by the increase in entrance fees approved by the US Congress last year. Due to take effect this month, the changes will mean for instance a doubling from \$10 to \$20 of the entrance charge for one car into the canyon this summer.

The rates change will especially benefit the largest parks which have been trying to reconcile falling federal contributions with rapidly rising visitor volumes. Yellowstone drew international attention to the issue last summer when it closed down some of its areas to tourists, pleading poverty.

By addressing motorised traffic, meanwhile, the government is getting into the central dilemma of the park system's management: at what point does the need to protect America's wonders become more important than the principle of keeping them accessible to all?

The plan gradually to expel private cars from the Grand Canyon will be put into motion this year and phased in over 15 years. If all goes well, from 2012 no more will be allowed entry.

"In some ways this says 'no more, we are not going to remain slaves to the automobile', as we have been," Ron Ambarger, the Superintendent of the Grand Canyon, said.

Pope puts faith in millennium

Andrew Gumbel
Rome

The Pope inaugurated the new year yesterday with a message of forgiveness and peace, urging the world to put past conflicts behind it and look forward instead to the jubilee celebrations that the Catholic Church is organising for the millennium.

John Paul's traditional greeting, delivered from the balcony of his private apartments in the Vatican, reflected many of his own personal concerns, as he looks back on a long life and searches for the physical strength to survive until 2000.

"May the Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, encourage us to begin this new year with gestures of love and, if necessary, reconciliation, in help build a better world marked by justice and peace," the Pope said. Earlier, while presiding over mass in St Peter's, he made mention of many of the world's persistent trouble spots, from the Middle East to Central Africa.

The 76-year-old pontiff looked in reasonable physical shape following his bout of abdominal surgery in October. He has deliberately taken it relatively easy over the Christmas period, skipping the main mass

on 25 December for the first time in his 19-year reign.

He has a typically busy schedule ahead of him in the next 12 months, including trips to the Czech Republic, France, Brazil and possibly Cuba. His recent messages make it clear that he is looking further ahead, to the task he sees as his historical destiny, guiding the Church through 2000.

The Pope sees the millennium as an opportunity to re-evangelise the world and has urged the opening of purses for a programme of church-building, particularly in Rome.

First indications suggest that the jubilee celebrations in Rome will be much more about cashing in on tourism and the construction industry than any spiritual revival. The Pope, however, remains unbowed. In a New Year's Eve service in the Roman Jesuit church of Sant'Ignazio, the Pope said he had "special reason" to give thanks for the past year and the preparations under way for 2000.

The big question is whether he can survive. This most resolute and physically resilient of popes has been diagnosed with a form of Parkinson's disease and has a history of severe abdominal problems.

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Iran orders out 1 million foreign workers

Iran has ordered employers to fire an estimated one million foreign workers, mostly Afghan refugees, by Saturday, saying most of them were illegal aliens. A Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs official, quoted by the daily *Hamshahr*, said employers of foreign workers must replace them with Iranian employees by 4 January.

Iran, which suffers from an official unemployment rate of nearly 11 per cent, is home to two million refugees - 1.4 million from Afghanistan and 600,000 from Iraq. This makes the country of more than 60 million people the world's most important host country, according to the United Nations refugee agency. *Reuter - Tehran*

Peru hostages pray for a peaceful end

Inside the dark Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima, Peru, 81 hostages and their rebel captors held candles during a New Year's Eve mass yesterday, praying for a peaceful end to the two-week-long standoff. Despite Tuesday's release of the Honduran ambassador and the Argentine consul, 81 of the initial 500 hostages were still trapped inside the compound. Red Cross workers brought the hostages four boxes of clean clothes and a holiday meal of sushi, fruit and fruit juice. *AP - Lima*

'Camp guard' fires on police

A man who was accused of being a Nazi death camp guard fired at reporters and police outside his home before he was shot in the leg by police. The US Justice Department had filed papers seeking to strip Michael Kohlhofer, 79, of his naturalised US citizenship, alleging he concealed his concentration camp ties when he applied for citizenship in 1952.

Mr Kohlhofer waved a gun at reporters, yelling at them to leave. When police were called to the scene, he fired shots and police returned fire. He was shot at least once in the leg and taken to the University of Kansas Medical Center. *AP - Kansas City*

Bombs dropped on Kabul

An aeroplane dropped several bombs on Kabul last night in the sixth such air raid in five days. The night sky was lit up with tracer fire as anti-aircraft gunners of the Islamic Taliban, who took the Afghan capital in September, tried to bring the attacking aircraft down.

There has been a spate of air-raids since Saturday when opposition planes launched four attacks in one day. The air raids began the day after opposition forces suffered a serious defeat at the hands of the Taliban. *Reuter - Kabul*

Mobutu orders togetherness

Zaire's President, Mobutu Sese Seko, called in a New Year message for the restoration of peace in his sprawling and anarchic nation to enable elections to take place this year as scheduled. In his traditional end of year speech broadcast by state television from his jungle palace in Gbadolite, Mobutu yesterday urged the entire population to pull together to complete Zaire's much-delayed democratic transition. *Reuter - Kinshasa*

Australia's Laos bomb plan

Australia considered joining the United States in covert bombing raids in Laos during the Vietnam War, but decided against it because it feared it could not keep it secret, according to 1966 Australian Cabinet documents, released by the Australian Archives under a 30-year secrecy rule, said the then Australian government head by Harold Holt was under pressure from the United States to join the secret air war over neutral Laos. *Reuter - Sydney*

Serbs rally for democracy

At least a quarter of a million people staged a huge New Year rally in Belgrade to demand democracy in Serbia, blowing whistles and ringing alarm clocks in an ear-splitting rebuff to President Slobodan Milosevic. The autocratic Socialist (SPS) leader only hours before had ignored six straight weeks of opposition street protests against electoral fraud in his New Year's message to a federal Serbian-led Yugoslavia, saying 1996 had been a very good year. *Reuter - Belgrade*

Snacktime doll warning

Each Cabbage Patch Snacktime Kids doll sold in future will have a label warning parents that its munching mouth can catch a child's hair or fingers. US federal officials and the toy maker Mattel Inc said on Tuesday. *AP - Washington*

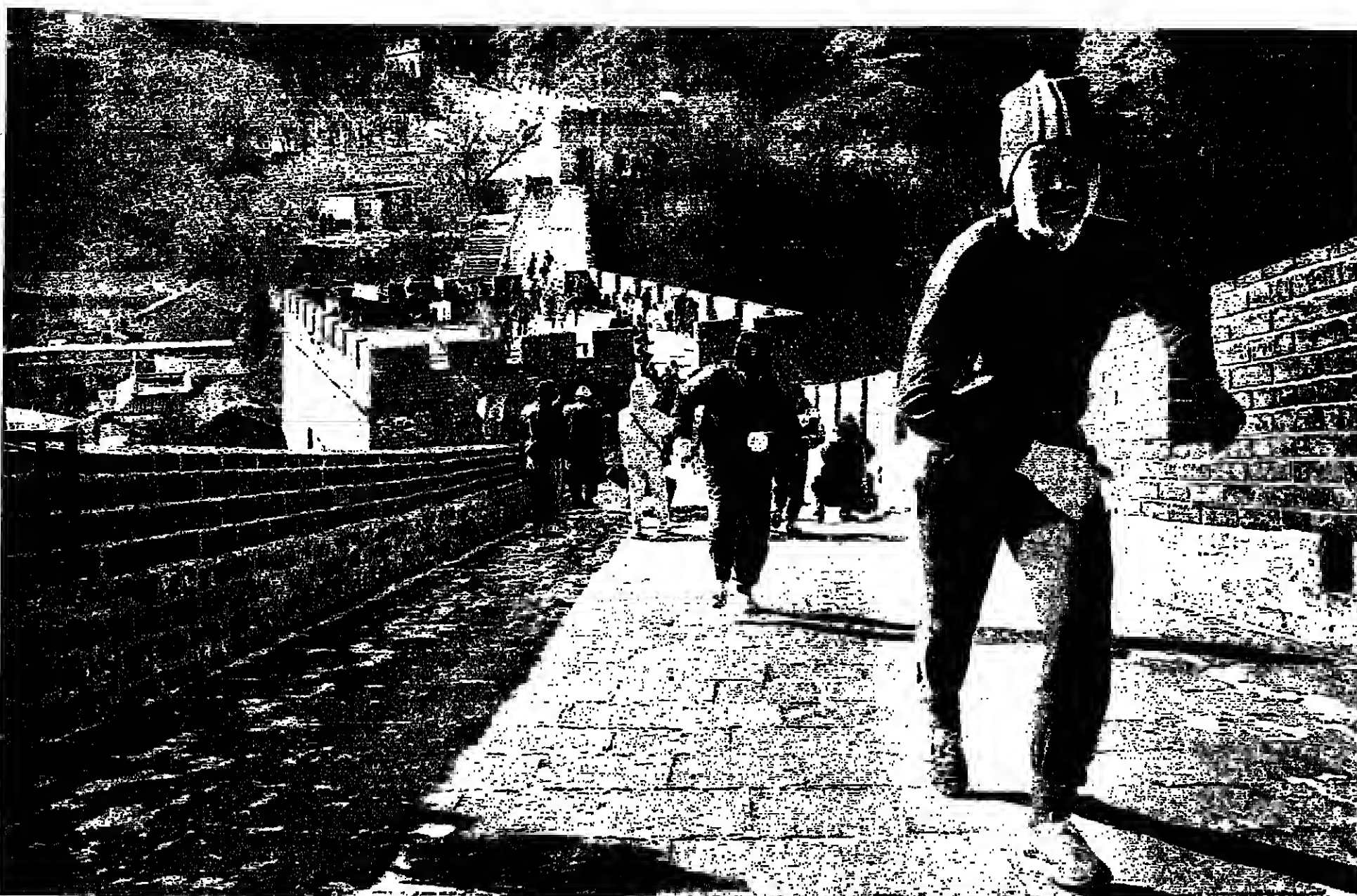
Skydivers survive fall

Two Australian skydivers survived a 500-metre fall to the ground after they collided in mid-air. Hundreds of horrified spectators at the National Skydiving Championships at Corowa watched as the two skydivers parachutes became entangled and they crashed into a paddock.

Geoff Divo was taken to hospital with a fractured skull, a collapsed lung and broken ribs. His jumping partner, Jerome Rich, escaped with minor bruises. *Reuter - Sydney*

Forty die in bus crash

At least 40 people died and dozens were injured in a head-on collision between two buses in southern Mozambique, state radio reported. The vehicles, one a minibus, collided on Tuesday on the country's main north-south highway, about 50 miles north of Maputo. *Reuter - Maputo*



Competitors in the second annual Great Wall races at Badaling, near Peking, battling strong head winds and a temperature of minus 25C yesterday. About 2,000 people had signed up for races over various distances, but most were kept away by the bad weather. The oldest of those who ran was 82 and the youngest was 5. Photograph: AP

TV reinforces Jiang's claim to succeed Deng

Teresa Poole
Peking



Deng Xiaoping: 'Intensive care'

Chinese state television last night broadcast the first of a 12-part series on Deng Xiaoping amid a flurry of rumours about the health of the ailing 92-year-old patriarch. The series is designed to usher in 1997 as one of the most 'significant' in Chinese history, with first the return of Hong Kong on 1 July and then the full Communist Party Congress in the autumn.

Mr Deng is the architect of China's reform and opening policies which have transformed the country since 1979, and the mastermind of the negotiations with Britain for the return of Hong Kong. The first programme introduced the great man's life story with choir singing, white doves flying, and a montage of Mr Deng's face superimposed on a panorama of Tiananmen Square with time-lapse film of orange clouds racing towards the camera.

It covered the first two decades of Mr Deng's life, starting with a guided tour of the restored family home in Sichuan province. No expense was spared, including sending a film crew to France to visit the various factories and towns where Mr Deng worked as a student after arriving in Marseille in 1920. As a result of his experiences in a Toulouse steel factory, the teenager 'discovered how capitalists exploited the workers', the programme said. Before long he had become

a 'Communist believer'. As well as reinforcing the official Deng myth, the series will seek to reaffirm the position of President Jiang Zemin as the inheritor of his mantle. Early in the first episode, in a filmed interview Mr Jiang gave in 1995, he lauded Mr Deng's role in China's 20th century history.

With party-fighting subdued while Mr Deng is still alive, it is in his interests that the old man lives until the party congress, when the President aims to cement his position as leader for the post-Deng era.

Mr Deng has not been seen in public for more than three years. The state of his health is secret, but he has so far defied repeated rumours that he was at death's door. In recent days, however, such rumours have re-emerged. The *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong yesterday said that on Monday night Mr Deng had been unable to wake him for supper. He recovered consciousness later

that night and was put under intensive care in his Peking house, which is fitted out like a hospital. The newspaper quoted a source close to the family as saying since early 1996 Mr Deng had experienced a 'spell of unconsciousness' about once a week. The source said he had not been admitted to hospital.

Earlier this week, *Sing Tao Daily* in Hong Kong quoted a Peking source as saying Mr Deng's health had deteriorated and he was sent to a military hospital last week. The *Apple Daily*, quoting Taiwan cable television, said Mr Deng's health had worsened and he had been sent to hospital. According to Reuters, no unusual movements had been noticed near the 301 hospital where Mr Deng is usually treated.

Analysts said the government would not have scheduled the television series if it thought Mr Deng, who is believed to have Parkinson's Disease and other ailments, might not make it to the last episode.

The introduction to the television series promised 'the real story' of Deng Xiaoping, which will test China's view of history. His early life is basically uncontroversial, but the propaganda departments will have had a harder time in deciding how to portray his zealous role in the 1957 anti-rightist movement, when tens of thousands were persecuted. The treatment of China's great famine and the brutal Cultural Revolution when Mr Deng was purged will also attract scrutiny.

Who dares loses in Singapore

Anyone crazy enough or brave enough to take on Singapore's ruling People's Action Party (PAP) in today's election can expect to have their past life minutely scrutinised for signs of misdemeanours and can be sure to face a torrent of vilification - that is if they are very lucky. Those who are not so fortunate can face loss of employment, disintegration of their marriages and bankruptcy through seemingly endless legal actions.

Remarkably, 39 people have braved the onslaught to run as opposition candidates. As one Western diplomat observed, 'the government makes it clear to people that the cost of political participation outside the PAP is too high.' The choice is simple, he says. 'If you stay non-political you live very well here. This is a government used to virtually total control of parliament and the media, and wants to keep it that way, while also keeping the legal forms of a democracy.'

On the eve of polling the PAP

Election's would-be opposition candidates face ruin at the hands of the ruling party. Stephen Vines reports

announced that eight of its members, including the Prime Minister, would be taking legal action against Tang Liang Hong, an opposition candidate who has been elevated as the demon of the election campaign for allegedly promoting 'Chinese chauvinism'. As is usual in these cases, Mr Tang is accused of libelling members of the ruling party.

The government and the PAP have never lost a libel case. The minimum cost of each case is about £130,000. It is therefore quite likely that these proceedings will bankrupt Mr Tang. That in turn will make him ineligible to stand for parliament.

The leader of Mr Tang's party, JB Jeyaretnam, has been down this route before, after he broke the PAP's unchallenged position in parliament by winning a single seat. He was then hit with a series of actions which led

to bankruptcy. His constituency was abolished and he has only just been able to stand again for parliament after serving a disqualification period. A further series of legal actions may well bankrupt him again.

The relentless harrying of the opposition kills two birds with one stone, says Chee Soon Juan, another opposition leader. It deals a blow to the target and sends a warning to anyone who might be thinking of joining the opposition.

Dr Chee knows what he is talking about. In 1992 he joined an opposition party. Three months later he was fired from his university teaching post on accusations of having sent an unauthorised copy of his wife's dissertation to the US. He was later accused of distorting tax fares claims of a few cents.

Then came the legal actions which forced him to sell his

house. Others followed and more may be pending. Despite this he, too, managed to win a seat in parliament but even there found himself on the receiving end of another onslaught. A typing error in a presentation he made about health-care costs resulted in accusations of perjury, misconduct and giving false information to parliament. The Parliamentary Privileges Committee found him guilty on all counts and issued a 196-page document to back up its findings.

When Dr Chee and three colleagues appeared before the committee to defend themselves they got into hot water again and were fined some £3,500 each for contempt, meaning they had asked questions or refused to answer questions which the PAP-controlled committee deemed to be holding parliament in contempt.

Why does Dr Chee bother when he could have enjoyed a quiet and relatively prosperous life as an academic? 'If you keep pushing a person you get his back up against the wall,' he says. 'There is no choice but to fight back.' He believes the current way of conducting politics cannot go on for ever. 'You've got to keep the candle lit for that time when it can burn bright.'

Voters who refuse to back the PAP can expect little mercy either. On Tuesday the PAP announced that it would scrutinise the election results precinct by precinct to see which voted for the opposition. Areas with high dissenting votes would find their housing services upgraded last.

This threat refines an earlier pledge to discriminate against whole constituencies that fail to elect PAP members. If, in the face of this onslaught, the opposition manages to improve on its 1991 performance, when it secured 39 per cent of the vote, the government may find that intimidation is not the best way to stay in power.

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Ten seconds that shook the Middle East



Close to catastrophe: An off-duty soldier, Noam Friedman (left), opens fire on Palestinian shoppers in Hebron, before an Israeli soldier, Avi Buskila (centre), jumps on him and drags him from the scene

Photographs: AP/Reuters

Gunman aimed to sabotage handover

Associated Press and Reuters

Palestinians dived to the ground in panic and shouted "massacre" when an Israeli soldier opened fire in all directions at the vegetable market in the heart of Hebron. The off-duty soldier, who lives in a Jewish settlement near Jerusalem, emptied the clip of his M-16 automatic rifle into the crowded open-air market before other soldiers overpowered him.

Noam Friedman, 19, fired for nearly 10 seconds into the market on Martyrs Street, wounding men, women and a youth, witnesses and doctors said.

At first, panic and confusion gripped everyone - Arabs, soldiers and Jewish settlers. The Jews thought they were under attack and began firing around the market. Police and soldiers rushed to the scene from the nearby Jewish enclave of Avraham Avinu, and witnesses said at least one Palestinian was wounded by them.

However, as it dawned on the Israelis that they were not the target, soldiers crept towards the gunman. A few Palestinians also moved towards him in an attempt to bring him down.

Israeli lieutenant Avi Buskila got there first. "When he entered the area of the square and began shooting, I stood at my post and heard the shots. Within 10 seconds I pinned him to the ground and took his gun," Lt Buskila said.

Even while on the ground the gunman tried to load a second magazine into his rifle. Soldiers then dragged him to a military jeep.

"It happened right in front of me," said stallholder Walid Kafsheh, 46. "I tried to stop him but the soldiers got to him first. Then soldiers and police came from everywhere shooting."

Abdel Karim Atrash, 16, was selling aubergines when he was hit by gunfire. "I turned and saw a soldier in uniform. I tried to run but felt a pain in my leg," Friedman fired between 10 and 15 rounds, witnesses said.

The director of Hebron's Alia Hospital initially said 11 Palestinians were wounded, but hospital officials later said that five people were hit by bullets, and nine others were hurt in beatings by Israeli troops.

The 19-year-old off-duty soldier was from the Maaleh Adumim settlement near Jerusalem. He was drafted five months ago and served in a logistics unit in Israel. He was not assigned to duty in Hebron. A senior Israeli army commander said Friedman did guard duty on Tuesday night at his base near Jerusalem, and got on a bus to Hebron yesterday morning. The gunman wore a skullcap and a white fringed undershirt, both symbols of a religious Jew.

Later, Friedman was defiant. He said he acted to sabotage the handover to the PLO of the town that he said was bought for the Jews 4,000 years ago by the biblical Abraham. "Abraham bought the Cave of the Patriarchs for 400 shekels of silver. No one will return it," said Friedman, triumphantly waving his fist in the air.

The cave, which is holy to Jews, is to remain under Israeli



Israeli soldiers and medics treating one of the Palestinian victims of the marketplace shooting Photograph: Reuters

The diary of violence in one long year

5 January: Yahya Ayyash, known as "The Engineer" and believed to be the mastermind of a wave of Islamic suicide bombings against Israel, is killed in the Gaza Strip when his cellular telephone blows up. The militant Islamic group Hamas vows to avenge his death, which it blames on Israel.

20 January: Palestinians hold first election for president and parliament to rule in the West Bank and Gaza under peace deal with Israel. Yasser Arafat, PLO chief, elected president.

25 February: Two Hamas suicide bombers kill 26 in attacks

in Jerusalem and the southern Israeli town of Ashkelon. Bombings said to be in revenge for the killing of Ayyash.

3 March: Hamas suicide bomber on a bus in Jerusalem kills 18. Israel declares all-out war against Hamas.

4 March: A Hamas suicide bomber kills 13 at a busy Tel Aviv shopping mall.

23 March: Israel, rocked by the suicide bombings, puts off scheduled withdrawal from Hebron, the seventh and last West Bank town still occupied.

29 May: Benjamin Netanyahu, a right-winger, ousts Shimon

Peres in national elections vowing to boost security.

23 July: Arafat meets David Levy, Israeli Foreign Minister, in Gaza.

2 August: Netanyahu infuriates Palestinians by lifting four-year freeze on West Bank Jewish settlement expansion imposed by previous government.

29 August: Palestinians hold first general strike in West Bank and Gaza in two years to protest at Israeli policy; heads of Israeli-PLO steering committee on implementation of interim peace deals hold first meeting since Netanyahu took office.

4 September: Netanyahu and Arafat hold first summit.

24 September: Israeli government opens tourist tunnel near Islamic holy site, igniting protests reminiscent of Palestinian uprising and further souring relations with Arab states.

25 September: Israeli soldiers kill five Palestinians and wound about 300 during protests in West Bank town of Ramallah.

26 September: Thirty-nine Palestinians and 11 Israelis die in clashes in the worst violence since Israel and the PLO signed peace deal in 1993.

27 September: Seven Palesti-

ans and three Israelis killed in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab East Jerusalem. Three of the Palestinians shot dead during stone-throwing protest outside Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque, Islam's third holiest shrine.

28 September: Arab shot dead in Gaza but Palestinian police keep lid on protests in most of the West Bank and Gaza.

29 September: President Clinton invites Netanyahu, Arafat, Jordan's King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to White House summit.

6 October: Following White House summit, Israel and PLO launch weeks of marathon talks on Hebron redeployment.

11 December: Guerrillas from the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine shoot dead a 12-year-old Israeli boy and his mother in a drive-by shooting near the PLO-ruled West Bank town of Ramallah. Five other settlers wounded.

12 December: Israeli farmer shoots dead a Palestinian worker in southern Israel.

24 December: Netanyahu and Arafat meet on Hebron. US Middle East envoy Dennis Ross reports "real progress".

every day from Hizbollah and other groups.

Most of the Israeli and SLA casualties fall in roadside bomb attacks against their patrols or in coordinated guerrilla raids on patrols or posts using mortar bombs, rockets or machineguns.

Lebanon's official National News Agency has reported that, barring the April Hizbollah-Israeli fighting, the guerrillas have launched a total of 365 attacks on the Israelis or

Arabs fear Israeli hold on Clinton's new team

John Carlin
Washington

High among President Bill Clinton's New Year resolutions will be to do all in his power to forge a lasting peace settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. However, two recent appointments he has made to top jobs in his administration have only made the challenge more daunting.

Madeleine Albright, the President's designated Secretary of State, and Rahm Emanuel, who replaces George Stephanopoulos as senior White House adviser, will only encourage the perception of the Palestinians and the Arab world that America cannot be trusted to play honest broker in the Middle Eastern conflict.

Given the huge distrust that Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu generates among Arabs, America's mediating role as negotiations evolve beyond the Hebron deal towards "final status" talks will become more critical than ever.

President Clinton will be seeking to press home the advantage by helping Israel rebuild bridges with its Arab neighbours, notably Egypt and Jordan. He would also like to add Syria to the peace equation Syria, as Israel's all-important security concerns cannot be met with Syrian co-operation.

The prospects of Ms Albright faring any better than the outgoing Warren Christopher at persuading Syria to do business with Mr Netanyahu, are not good. It is not only a question of style, although temperamentally Ms Albright is to Mr Christopher as Lady Thatcher was to Sir Geoffrey Howe. More to the point, Ms Albright's record as US ambassador to the United Nations offered evidence once more of America's special relationship with Israel.

Mr Emanuel remains for now a relatively unknown quantity. But as his fame spreads, the news will also reach the Arab world that the middle name of President Clinton's new eminence grise is Israel.

Rahm Israel Emanuel's father fought with the Israeli underground in the war for Israeli nationhood. Mr Emanuel senior named his three sons after Israeli heroes who died in that war. The Emanuel family was brought up in Chicago but summer holidays were always spent in the Jewish homeland. Rahm Emanuel was born in the US but kept Israeli dual citizenship until he was 18. During the Gulf

War he displayed his allegiance to the land of his father when he volunteered to serve in the Israeli army. He spent two-and-a-half weeks at a military base near the Lebanese border.

It was events at the Lebanese border eight months ago which revealed to Arab leaders the extent of Ms Albright's commitment to the Israeli cause. She argued vehemently against a UN decision to publish a human rights report heavily critical of the Israeli artillery bombardment of Qana, in southern Lebanon, which killed more than 100 Palestinian refugees. Ms Albright said publication of the report would damage American peace efforts.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in an interview in November that colleagues at the UN had warned him at the time that his decision to overrule Ms Albright's request not to publish the report would cost him his job as UN Secretary-General.

In an article published in yesterday's *New York Times* Mr Boutros-Ghali, who bade his final farewell to the UN yesterday, said Ms Albright was

Boutros-Ghali's decision to publish a report critical of Israel may have cost him his job

well aware of the difficulties she would encounter in persuading the Arab world of her "bona fides".

Mr Boutros-Ghali was at a dinner two weeks ago attended by Ms Albright. It was a tense encounter, for only days earlier she had succeeded in her crusade to dash his hopes of a second term as Secretary-General. "What went wrong?" he asked her. "Why this campaign against me for six months?"

According to Mr Boutros-Ghali, she fobbed him off an "official interpretation" and then proceeded to ask him for help in the new challenges she would face after her promotion to Secretary of State.

"She asked me to help her in relations with the Arabs," said Mr Boutros-Ghali, an Egyptian veteran of Middle Eastern diplomacy. "She made the point that she knew because she was against my re-election that the Arab world was not happy."

Israeli deaths in south Lebanon highest for 10 years

Rashid Sinno
Reuters

Beirut - Fighting between Muslim guerrillas and Israeli forces and their militant allies in south Lebanon killed 255 people in 1996, including 27 Israeli soldiers.

The soldiers' deaths make up the highest annual Israeli death toll on the last active Arab-Israeli frontline for more than a decade.

In 1995, 175 people died in south

Lebanon violence including 23 Israeli soldiers. A year earlier, 21 Israelis were among 201 people killed there. The 1996 figure is the highest annual Israeli death toll in Lebanon since 1985, when 37 soldiers died.

The Jewish state pulled out the bulk of its 1982 invasion force that year and set up a border zone in the south to protect its northern areas from raids.

Besides the 27 Israeli casualties,

the 1996 death toll includes 155 civilians and 54 guerrillas belonging mainly to the pro-Iranian Hizbollah and 19 militiamen of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA).

In 1995, the guerrillas killed 33 SLA men while the Israelis and their militia allies killed 72 guerrillas.

The main reason behind the rise in the south Lebanon death figures last year was a 17-day Israeli blitz against Hizbollah in April that - ac-

cording to Lebanese officials - killed at least 170 people, mostly civilians.

A US-brokered ceasefire agreement that ended the campaign, barred firing at civilians but allowed raids on the Israeli-held zone and gave both sides the right to self-defence.

Some 1,000 Israeli troops and the 3,000-strong SLA control a the 15-mile-wide zone in south Lebanon. They come under attack almost

every day from Hizbollah and other groups.

Most of the Israeli and SLA casualties fall in roadside bomb attacks against their patrols or in coordinated guerrilla raids on patrols or posts using mortar bombs, rockets or machineguns.

Lebanon's official National News Agency has reported that, barring the April Hizbollah-Israeli fighting, the guerrillas have launched a total of 365 attacks on the Israelis or

SLA in 1996. The remainder of the 1996 casualties in Lebanon include 13 people killed in various explosions in the country and 132 killed in non-political murders. There were 103 non-political murders in Lebanon in 1995 and 120 a year earlier.

Israeli planes raided suspected guerrilla targets in south Lebanon on Tuesday night shortly after a guerrilla attack on two Israeli army posts.

A Hizbollah spokesman in Beirut said that the air attack targeted the Jabal Sojoud area of the Iqlim al-Toufah ridge used by the pro-Iranian guerrillas to wage attacks on Israeli forces occupying the border zone.

Sources with the SLA militia said the Israeli jets raided Iqlim al-Toufah after guerrillas attacked two Israeli posts on the edge of the Israeli-held zone. No one was hurt in the assaults, they said.

صكتا من الامم

The Church and Labour should be in harmony

The bishops are on a roll. From the Bishop of Rome down the bearers of cross and mitre are getting assertive. Their New Year messages exude confidence, the conviction that if not the Force then certainly the zeitgeist is now with them. This seems especially true of the Anglicans. It is not just what Simon Coventry, Mark Birmingham and other leading occupants of the bench of bishops are saying but the style with which they are saying it. Gone entirely is that hand-wringing diffidence which used to characterise Anglican pronouncements. Just before Christmas John Redwood told the bishops – this is an ancient Tory incantation – to provide a moral lead to the nation. Well, that is what they are now doing and it serves him right. It may not quite amount to an episcopal injunction to vote Labour or Liberal Democrat, but it comes pretty close to an invitation to throw off Tory rule for the sake of the nation's moral health.

It could be that the bishops have imbibed too deeply of Christmas spirit. After all, they are prelates of churches in which only a fraction of English people are active. Yet in a secular society the churches retain some influence, greater than numbers alone would justify; the bishops are still in a position to stir things up. Many people will demur at that. They hear the bishops talking morality and say, didn't last year see that word gang-raped by the politi-

cal bully-boys. In 1996 morality became a code-word for reactionary views about sex and the family.

The bishops' New Year messages are about morality, yes, but they talk about obligations wider than parents and children, husbands and wives. They have not left those behind but they have placed them in a social context. Morality, they say, is also about the equity of institutions, about income distribution, urban deprivation. Morality is about judging the balance between public and private interest and determining the right way of conducting politics in a pluralist democracy. This is moral talk worth hearing – especially by the parties of the centre and left.

Earlier this week, in a desperate piece of confected controversy, the BBC tried to set the Labour Party up by squeezing remarks about abortion out of Archbishop Thomas Winning. Imagine, a Roman Catholic cardinal saying something disapproving about abortion! The real story was that those Scottish Labour MPs who, the cardinal claimed, were being censored on the abortion issue are, generally speaking, oldish Labour and well to the left of Tony Blair on questions of trade unions, state involvement in the economy and so on. It is a fair bet that Cardinal Winning is also, economically speaking, on the left.

That is why, for all the surface ripples about the cardinal's attack on Tony Blair, Labour needs more not less

intervention in politics by bishops like him. Labour does not have to concede a single inch over the abortion question to see that there is a lot more to morality than the fate of foetuses. One of the oddest aspects, indeed, of this whole Blair/Winning/abortion story is the suggestion that there is anything new in it. Cabinet papers for 1966 released this week confirm Harold Wilson's personal caution when it came to the great "permissive" legislation passed when he was Prime Minister. His hesitation stemmed partly from his own personal convictions, partly his awareness of Catholic sentiment in and

around his Huyton seat on Merseyside. What has changed since then?

Ordinary Catholics vote, like everyone else, for reasons of personal interest. They also pay some attention to their priests who, like the Pope in Rome, have never exhausted morality in talking about sex. Morality is also about justice in the tax system, about social obligations, the distribution of income and wealth and, as the present Pope often says, just treatment by employers of their employees. Working-class Catholics traditionally voted Labour, as they still do, because Labour represented fairness in society and fairness at work. Cardinal

Winning's statements about abortion are not going to change that nor, pace the BBC, are they intended to.

In his New Year message the Bishop of Oxford, Richard Harries, deplored what he called "pick and mix" morality. Some people will say, ah, you cannot have fairness in society and "social morality" without buying into reactionary religious positions on abortion (forbidden) and marriage (indissoluble). This is nonsense. There is a moral case to be made for the termination of pregnancy, constructed from fundamental tenets about individual choice and social responsibility. The point the bishops are making is surely that politicians can and ought to reach into these fundamentals and argue them through, escaping the superficiality of who worships where how many times a month.

The fact is that Labour is well-positioned on this moral territory. Even in its modish, Mandelsoned form it still has easier access to the language of commitments, responsibilities and reciprocal obligations than the Tories can ever aspire to. Tory talk about the morality of social arrangements (which necessarily encompasses most ostensibly personal conduct as well) rings hollow: neither John Major nor his intellectual partisans in the right-wing press have yet attempted to repudiate that devastating remark by Margaret Thatcher about there being no such thing as society.

The practical conclusion for Labour

in 1997 is straightforward. The more bishops mounting the pulpit the better... When they start influencing voters, then Labour needs to start worrying. Because then it will have to address the milk-and-water nature of so many of its tax and spending commitments and the resulting doubt whether a Blair-led government would make Britain a fairer place.

A perfect meal: read all about it

The latest edition of *Cultural Trends* confirms what a cursory glance in any bookshop window will tell you: books with pictures sell more copies than those without. Among books with pictures, increasing numbers of cookery books are being bought. But to what effect? We know that certain of Delia Smith's favourite things (eg peppers for grilling) are now supermarket staples. Yet we also know that along with all those books, the volume of sales of convenience foods is rising, suggesting that less peeling, chopping and slicing is going on in the nation's kitchens. How is that circle to be squared? Could it be that more and more people are eating Marks & Spencer ready-to-eat meals with one of the latest cookery books propped up in front of them?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Will Saudis allow nurses a fair trial?

Sir: The article by the Saudi ambassador on "Why Islam's law bewilders the West" (1 January) was of real interest as an answer to the populist point of view on the current proceedings against the two British nurses, which as he rightly pointed out is mistakenly concentrating on the law as practised in Muslim states. It is not however an answer to those of us concerned with the behaviour of law-enforcement agencies and the conduct of fair trials involving foreigners. One can accept that criminal codes are God-made and that it is up to the foreigner in a country to observe the laws, but in this particular instance our legitimate concerns are not being addressed.

There is more than enough gossip, most of it apparently from Saudi circles, and little enough known fact surrounding this case. The main substantiated cause of concern is that one way and another consular officials were prevented from access to the accused, contrary to the Vienna convention, and that the nurses may have been subject to unfair pressure over a period of four days to extract a confession or confessions. If our understanding is in any way correct the facts must be thoroughly probed at trial and the so-called confessions rejected. It is our understanding that this is also Muslim law.

The main causes of anxiety as to the trial procedure are two.

Is the basic right to have a lawyer to speak for you at trial and question witnesses to be observed?

Is the trial to take place in public? If not, will the authorities allow international legal rights observers to be present? With due respect to our local diplomats, who will have the right to be present under international convention, they are not versed in international procedural standards.

All legal systems, including our own, have common procedural problems that are tackled over time by human beings whose first duty to man and God is to protect the innocent before considering the punishment of the guilty. There is at least one example of a country that combines punishments and laws unacceptable to Western opinion with the highest standards of judicial and procedural fairness. Perhaps the example of the Singapore courts could commend itself in this context.

STEPHEN JAKOBI
Director
The Fair Trials Abroad Trust
Richmond, Surrey

NHS staff driven to despair

Sir: In her predictive review of a Labour-governed 1997 (30 December) Polly Toynbee restates your editorial theme that the post-1990 NHS structure "actually works well" and will be left unchanged. Certainly few hospital clinicians would press for major organisational upheaval but even fewer would tolerate the loathsome hypocrisy of the internal market for another five years.

The reality of hospital funding through individual GP transactions and short-term health authority contracts is a two-tier, stop-go service where clinical need is subverted by financial caprice and public accountability is



replaced by self-serving propaganda from managers and quangocrats.

Hospital staff around the country are battle-weary from protecting patient services from the sham of the market. Unless this is replaced by a long-term commissioning system for secondary health care, increasing numbers of doctors, nurses and paramedics will retreat disillusioned into retirement or private practice. Health care in the UK will be in danger of following the US example of escalating costs and inconsistent standards.

MALCOLM SIMMS FRCS
Consultant Surgeon
Birmingham

Sir: May I offer an encouraging thought for the year ahead? At a time when so many bricks are hurled at the National Health Service, it makes a pleasant change to be able to give unstinted praise.

My wife, a stroke victim without any real prospect of recovery, is a patient on Priory Ward of Guisborough General Hospital. There, during the festive season, no effort was spared to provide good cheer. Everyone, including regular visitors like myself, partook of an excellent Christmas lunch. The nursing and support staff gave of their best to provide celebratory warmth and merriment, and they certainly succeeded.

Of course, all this has nothing to do with NHS internal markets: it is about a real concern for the happiness of people struck down by illness. So long as such admirable spirit continues to prevail in our hospitals, all is not lost.

PETER ORR
Guisborough
Cleveland

Caring anglers? Ask the fish

Sir: For the many anglers D A Beaumont (letter, 28 December) says he knows who go to great lengths to ensure the safety and welfare of fish they catch, I know many who do not.

I observe them quite regularly on my daily walks, sitting along the river bank and, in the summer, often asleep with cans of lager at their side, waiting for the electronic bite alarm on their rods to wake them if they get a bite. What skill is there in that? I rarely see an unhooking mat used; hence the damaged fish one can see in photographs in the angling press, injured by either being de-hooked on gravel surfaces or being kept too long with other fish in a keep net. My daily walk to the river is to check on swans for a local rescue group. Most days – somewhere – a tackled swan is rescued and treated, often for the surgical removal of barbed hooks and other angling equipment. There is now a need for a National Swan Convention held in the autumn at Stratford-upon-Avon to review this growing problem.

Anglers may well wish to give the impression of caring for the waters and wildlife but there is a cruel and unacceptable face to this sport.

ROSALIND BARNES
Langley, Berkshire

Sir: D A Beaumont suggests that the purpose of fishing for most anglers is to "pit their wits and expertise against the... fish". This would be

fine if the fish were a willing participant, and if it were not risking rather more than the angler.

Angling organisations sometimes claim that fish are cold-blooded and therefore cannot feel pain.

However, there is no scientific basis for this argument and the RSPCA Medway Report concluded that fish could feel pain in the same way as any other vertebrate. Why else would they have a nervous system?

Mr Beaumont says anglers care deeply about the fish that they catch and return. I suggest they demonstrate their compassion in a simple but effective way: stop fishing.

RICHARD MOUNTFORD
Birmingham

Sir: As a superior species on this planet we fail miserably in being compassionate to those who are at our mercy. At no time in human history have animals suffered at the hands of mankind as much as now.

Mahatma Gandhi said: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress should be judged by the way it treats its animals." As we approach the 21st century, mankind should make peace with the animal kingdom.

NTTIN MEHTA,
President, Young Indian Vegetarians
West Croydon, Surrey

Sir: Seventy years ago, two small children in North Yorkshire happened to be in at the kill when a hunted vixen was run to earth.

She was dug out by hunt servants, whose spades chopped up her cubs – for Lord G was hunting out of season. She was thrown to

the hounds, and her one surviving cub was taken for rearing and future sport. Farmers benefited, since shooting foxes would have cost them their tenancies, all the landowners being sportsmen.

My sister and I were lucky not to be bloodied by having the shredded vixen smeared over our heads, the traditional initiation of newcomers to the sport.

PETER HILL
Tunworth-in-Arden, Warwickshire

Mad logic of the house market

Sir: As one who is trying to move house I am fascinated by pronouncements from housing spin-doctors (commonly known as estate agents) on the impending house price boom ("House prices cheer Tories", 27 December). It seems to be the received wisdom that many vendors are keeping their houses off the market until prices rise. This may be true, but the logic seems flawed.

If we assume that most people selling a house will be buying another one, and that the new house will cost more than the one they have sold, we can see the problem more clearly. If prices rise on a percentage basis (as say the spin-doctors), while people keep their house off the market the price of the house they want to buy will increase by a greater sum than the one they have to sell and they are going to be worse off.

Perhaps the logical solution is to

sell your existing house and buy your new one as soon as possible, before the much-lauded boom. But no one has ever said the housing market is governed by logic.

Dr MARTIN PREESE
Chester

No more 'safe' white-collar jobs

Sir: Yvette Cooper (article, 30 December) sees middle-class anxiety over jobs as an illusion, but a valuable one, prompting sympathy for those whose jobs really are both fleeting and unrewarding.

But Ms Cooper should not assume that the middle class consists entirely of young, highly-educated job-hoppers. For some years, many older middle-class people have been losing the "safe" jobs they acquired many years previously. These workers possess neither the qualifications of the youthful go-getters, nor the street-wise skills of working-class survivors. Many are opting for "early retirement" at 50, rather than face the unequal battle for a job.

By all means let us have more educational opportunities for a dispossessed labour force, but let us also provide solid support and career guidance for those middle-class people for whom redundancy is not just another career move. This is a task which local colleges should cheerfully take on, as they did in the Eighties. Then the "bridge" programmes for unemployed white-collar workers flourished, surprisingly, under Margaret Thatcher.

ROLAND PEARSON
Pinner, Middlesex

Oasis in the land of hyperreality

Sir: Invoking Baudrillard, Peter Popham describes a redoubling of Oasis stories as "post-modern" ("Oasis after the orgy", 30 December). He compares the band's simulation of cultural and aesthetic forms (such as their apparent aping of celebrity) unfavourably with the originality of the Beatles (who apparently discovered transgression, narcotic and otherwise, first). Popham claims that the reduplication of images by and of Oasis keeps them famous long after they should have disappeared. I would like to suggest that Popham misses an important aspect of Baudrillard's argument.

It is right to say that Oasis can gain our attention without absolute justification, but this does not mean that their status is entirely false. This is because they occupy what Baudrillard calls the *hyperreal*. This is not the unreal any more than it is the absolutely real. Rather, it is a dimension of indistinction between (particularly media) representations and what they purport to represent. The real status of hyperreality is undecidable, because the media image is real (for example, effective, even if not truthful) just as real things are always minimally mediated (for example, televisually).

This complication is absent from Popham's article, which appeals to entirely real and unreal things as soon as it suggests that (real) people are duped into consuming Oasis despite their false (or unreal) media image. Against these appeals, it is worth considering the possibility that Oasis fans buy their music despite as well as because of their media image, and that Popham's article is just another article about how there should be fewer articles about Oasis.

Dr MARTIN MURRAY,
School of Library and
Media Studies
University of North London
London N7

Shops heat the high street

Sir: I was amazed on New Year's Eve, when the outside temperature was -2C, to find shops with their doors deliberately kept open. When I asked about this in one shop, I was told to mind my own business, as they had orders from management to do this and they were quite warm, thank you.

They seemed quite oblivious of the fact that they were wasting large amounts of energy, especially from overhead heaters next to the doors. Considering that the national electricity supply is stretched to its limit in such weather, this seems sheer madness.

DAVID NOWELL
New Barnet
Hertfordshire

Whiz-kids

Sir: On 23 December you reported that 1,500 City bankers and brokers had each received a bonus of more than £500,000. The total budget of the primary school of whose governors I am chairman is less than £500,000. The school has some 340 pupils. We have got our national priorities obscenely wrong.

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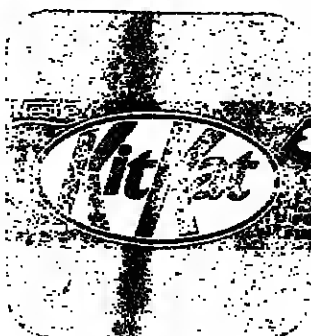


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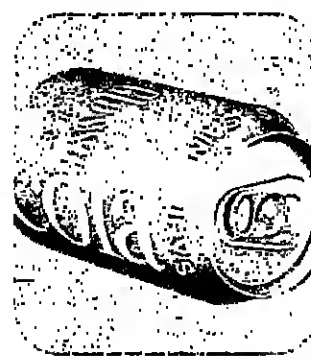
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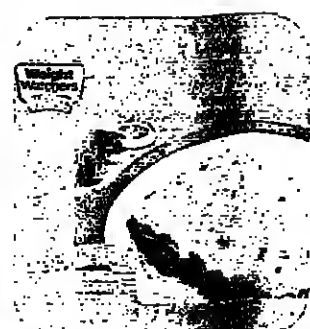
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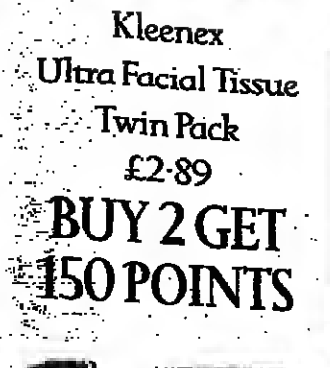
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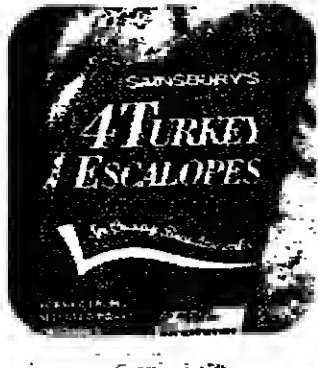
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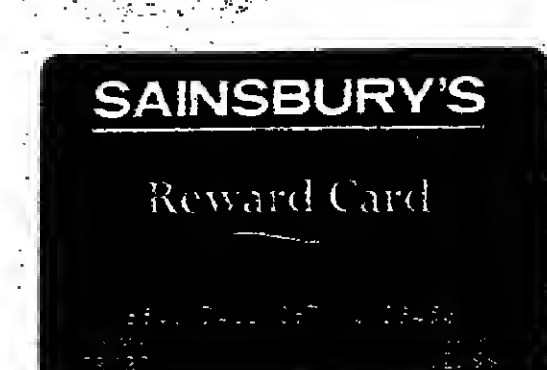
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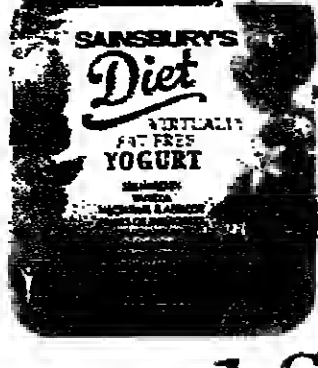
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essay



The joys of a sound Constitution

Britain's system of government may look silly, but improving it would be difficult. In the first of a three-part series, Richard D North makes the case against major reform

Everyone knows that the British Constitution doesn't exist. And that it is unique in not being written down in documents – certainly not in a single one. It is famously a set of arrangements and understandings. So if we want to understand it, the obvious thing is to go to the Old Bailey in London, or our local town hall and magistrate's court, and see it at work. Children have always done that, and are usually properly impressed by the odd mixture of showmanship and seriousness they see.

Even so, Walter Bagehot, the great 19th-century constitutional essayist, approved of someone who said: "The cure for admiring the House of Lords was to go and look at it." He only half meant it, but the alternating clamour and tedium of government might indeed fuel the cynicism that opinion polls report – the easy disservice of the well-governed.

So it is sensible to take an interest in the likes of Burke, Macaulay and Bagehot (or Plato, Melbourne and a dozen others) who have discussed the nature of government, often rather in the manner of anthropologists describing how the odd behaviour of some tribe in fact makes sense. Not that any prescriptions, or the system, are set in stone; Edmund Burke noted, as though to counteract his seeming traditionalism: "A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation."

True to the spirit of much writing about the Constitution, we can begin by saying what it is not. Though an understanding of the nuances of the system is best to be found in something like the *Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations*, it is absolutely not about politics. It is the machinery by which politics works. It has to be able to breathe in a vacuum. Its ability to help a rabble become a society is never better displayed than when the politicians are at each other's throats fighting about who should be in charge.

A constitution depends on the sort of people it governs. You apply the same adjectives to a constitution as to the people it fits (or ill-fits). The British Constitution might not work for any other people, but it is, like us, reasonable without being rational. We pride ourselves that no other people would tolerate, or could have contrived, so haphazard a way of preserving justice and liberty.

Yet on all sides, people want to reform the Constitution. Some of the urge flows from a sense that the system ought to reflect their present style, not their inherited habits. In fact, the Constitution is sometimes almost too good at being modern: it allows, for instance, the current taste for trivial abuse and grandstanding to the media to pervade the House of Commons: the verbal truce promised after John Smith's death lasted for weeks, not months.

Besides, much of the British Constitution's style (the parliament building itself, and many of its customs) are antique only in appearance: they were put together by Victorians in an age when Mammon wanted to clothe itself in medievalism. But it is true that some habits attach to the thing being very old, and proud of it: the roles of heredity and religion, and some habits inherited from the 17th century, are genuinely important and might be hard to shift. They may become more fashionable if we learn that deference can be liberating, and need be only a very mild form of subservience.

Even the most peculiar bits of the Constitution constantly refresh themselves. The monarchy certainly does, if a little bizarrely. The monarchy appeals to many: to the thoughtless, because it provides a family soap opera; to the intellectual, because it enshrines lofty mysteries; and especially to women, "who care", as Walter Bagehot remarked, "50 times more for a marriage than a ministry". Nearly everyone senses that it would be a pity if it ceased to work.

We have the House of Lords, in which people who share only the characteristics of having had (often surprisingly recent) ancestors who were rapacious or industrious or both, and who have mostly had an Eton education, are allowed to talk and vote on an equal footing with the most distinguished elder statesmen, churchmen and lawyers in the land (who are often the scions of long dynasties of the worldly wise).

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A fanatical belief in democracy makes democratic institutions impossible - Bertrand Russell, 1872-1970

I feel an insuperable reluctance in giving my hand to destroy any established institution of government on a theory, however plausible it may be - Edmund Burke, 1729-1797

The worst sort of tyranny the world has ever known: the tyranny of the weak over the strong. It is the only tyranny that lasts - Oscar Wilde, 1854-1900

Authority doesn't work without prestige, or prestige without distance - Charles de Gaulle, 1890-1970

From Ardal to OJ: the names in the frame

Every year, people who have been analysing the births columns write to *The Independent* to tell us that Sophie has edged ahead of James again or that James and John are still popular. Regular readers of this column will know that I have a more sophisticated approach: I take names only from the newspaper headlines, thus making sure that I find all the most influential names of the year.

In 1995, for instance, I found that the most common first name for boys according to the headline test was one not even mentioned in the births columns. It was, of course, "OJ".

Another popular name in 1995 was Nick, being borne by such celebrities as Nick Faldo, Nick Leeson, Nick Ross, Anne 'n' Nick etc. Most of these have vanished from public fame (for a long time, in Mr Leeson's case) with the curious result that this year the name Nicholas has overtaken Nick. Not, in all cases, with happy results. The name Nicholas seems to be favoured by politicians who have a habit of slipping on banana skins. Sir Nicholas Lyell, for instance, who was

adjudged by the Scott Report to have got things so badly wrong that a less sensitive man might have thought of resigning. Nicholas Soames, for another example, who told the House that he had got it all wrong about Gulf War Syndrome, and was sorry for having misled the House, and Sir Nicholas Scott, who was adjudged by his constituency party to have been lying. Lying on a pavement because of painkillers, apparently, but still lying. Our advice is to take anything told you by a politician called Nicholas with a pinch of salt. And Michael, too, if we think of Howard and Portillo.

And William, too, if we think of William Waldegrave who was adjudged by the Scott Report to have told untruths to Parliament but who told us he could not see why he should resign. Maybe this was not true either.



Miles Kingston

- and so was Ardal, which seems to be a name favoured by Irish comedians along with Dermot and Dylan. I am convinced that Neil would have been up there if only Neil Hamilton had had the courage to take on the *Guardian* in court, or at least slipped them some money to stop them asking questions, but it was not to be.
- So, without further ado, to the top 10 male names of 1996. Drum roll and fanfare, please! (Last year's positions are in brackets, incidentally.)
1. Mister (1)
 2. Benjamin (1)
 3. Wallace (1)
 4. Gromit (1)
 5. Colin (1)
 6. Mohammed (1)
 7. Nicholas (9)
 8. Saddam (7)
 9. Bumbol (7)
 10. Paul (7)

The Year title, despite having kept any signs of a personality invisible from the public. The same is true of John Major, who was awarded a personality by listeners of *Today*, but not by anyone else. Perhaps it was a joke by multiple telephoners from the Tory party.

There were some new names among the male candidates. Nice to see Slobodan and Radovan on the up, as well as Gareth, the only high new name to emerge from Euro 96. Arwel was a new one on me, being borne by one of the emerging Welsh rugby stars.

his second name, pronounced Neil-and-yahoo. Wallace and Gromit need no explanation, though I may say *en passant* how nice it is to see a dog's name up there. Colin is the name of the man who should have been American president. Every time Clinton or Dole was mentioned (and, incidentally, isn't it odd that a man named after unemployment pay should run for the presidency?), someone else wrote regretfully about Colin Powell being so much better. Moham(m)ed is the name shared by the man who owns Harrods and *Punch* and also by Mohammed al-Masari, the now forgotten Saudi troublemaker, and indeed by the great Prophet, Bumbol is the name of the king of Thailand who has not only been on the throne for 40 years but also likes jazz, which is beyond any of our royal family. And Paul creeps in finally because there are so many people called Paul - Gambacini, Merton, Gascoigne, Boateng, etc - and nobody called Gazza any more.

سكنا من الاجل



Britain took up arms in two world wars not, as many believe, to prevent an invasion but to bring its influence to bear upon the Continent

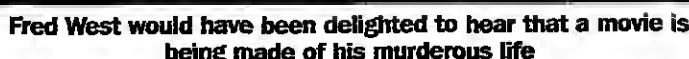
Next day, 18 June, Churchill said that sort of thing by delivering to Commons his "finest hour" speech, in which he said: "I know that he will have to be prepared to defend this island or lose the war ... If we are to survive as a whole world ... will sink into a new Dark Age ..." Even so, it

put a stop to in the House speech: "Hitler took us in this way, and we fail then the abyss of a world war was not until

If the two world wars have a lesson for us today as we face historic decisions about how far and how fast to go along the road of European integration, it is a lesson not about defending British sovereignty but about maintaining British influence for the good in the affairs of continental Europe.

Freddy's final fantasy – watching you watching him

by Suzanne Moore



Books and films, however, are not the same thing. What would a film of West's life story attempt to achieve? Who would play West? Anthony Hopkins or Colin Firth? If West's life was extraordinary it was also increasingly repetitive – dramatic tension would have to be found in the murders themselves. Otherwise we could have ourselves a little romance. Rosemary and Fred's "evil love" for each other would be the narrative through which we encountered the man's life.

Our fascination with West is also sexual. I doubt there will be offers flooding in on the rights to film Thomas Hamilton's life. We may not like to admit it but the sexual torture and death of young women is titillating. We live in a culture, after all, in which the murder of women is part of our proud heritage. Not long ago I got out of a car at midnight in Shoreditch only to stumble upon an assertive young American woman carefully explaining how to remove a uterus from a female corpse. I was in the middle of a Jack the Ripper tour.

**The murder
of women is
part of our
proud
heritage**

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Just as few of us ever remember the names of the Ripper's victims, so, too, are all the lost girls of the West case unlikely to have their stories properly told. No one will find them interesting enough individuals to make movies of their brief lives or write long psychological profiles about them. No one much cared how they explored their fantasies. If a life's worth can be measured by its hold in the public imagination, theirs is still without much worth. West didn't think there were worth anything either.

Yet, as long as this killer is so much more fascinating to us than the killed, then we cannot afford to be outraged at the prospect of a film of the life story of Fred West. And, as long as we are in thrall to such death stories rather than life stories, then we will want to see everything we can. Just like Freddy did.

The stove that's hot in Hollywood

Tinseltown is gaga about Agas, it seems, as the cast-iron chunk of British kitchen culture finds its way into films as well as film-stars' homes, writes Ann Treneman

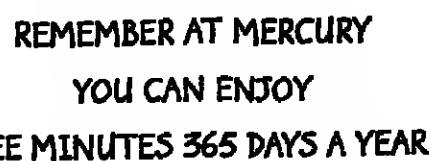
more, but they feigned ignorance. Didn't they feel an overwhelming desire to discover Britain's ancient rural roots by purchasing the cooker invented by a Swede in 1922 and manufactured in the Midlands using Russian ore and Australian coal? "No, not really. Never heard of it", was the universal response.

around - and America is the perfect place because if you are rich there you have two houses and one is in the mountains, and what better welcome can you get than from an Aga?"



liness by Joan Plowright. It is comforting, it is warm, it is a stove for saving puppies, not roasting them. It is a stove for the Julias of this world, and not those who drive a car with the

SHOULD OLD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT?



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Fear for jobs as Pitman talks of outsourcing to India

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

The head one of the country's biggest banks will spark fresh fears of a massive new wave of job losses in the new year after warning that the industry still employs too many people and should consider "outsourcing" services to countries like India.

"much lower costs" by contracting out many of their activities.

"I don't think we have fully confronted the opportunities in outsourcing and what the consequences will mean for our business as we really grab the opportunities of much lower costs ... by getting business done elsewhere," he said.

Addressing a conference to launch "Leading People", a study of leadership in financial and business service sector, Sir

Brian said that increasing competition would lead senior management to consider "much more outsourcing than we have at the moment".

In a reference to the whole of British industry, he said: "It is not a question of producing quality products at a high price, it is producing top quality products at the lowest price possible."

Companies in widely different sectors such as British Airways and North West Water are

already taking advantage of the low salaries earned by proficient and English-speaking Indians. Data-processing staff in the sub-continent generally earn around a tenth of the salaries received by British colleagues and so the burgeoning software industry in India can comfortably undercut in-house services in Britain.

A report by the Delhi-based National Association of Software and Service Companies pointed out that the sub-continent

had "the second-largest English-speaking scientific and trainable manpower pool in the world".

While it started from a low base, the association calculated that the Indian software sector had grown 46 per cent annually between 1990 and 1995 - almost twice as fast as the business in the United States.

The author of the leadership report, Amin Rajan of the research consultancy Create, believes the resurgent interest in

"outsourcing" could mean banks farming out cheque processing, insurance companies contracting out the payment of claims and securities dealers outsourcing settlements. Tens of thousands of jobs are involved in such activities. One chief executive of a banking group told Mr Rajan that 15 per cent of the company's costs could be saved by contracting out money transmission.

In the 1980s companies began by outsourcing in-house services such as catering and cleaning, then proceeded to farm out information technology systems. Next an increasing number of "core" activities will be contracted out, he believes.

However, Mr Rajan argues in the report that the first "outsourcing" wave would benefit companies in the UK.

Countries like India would begin to benefit later as the cost advantages became clearer and knowledge of their expertise spread.

Ed Sweeney, general secretary of the Banking Insurance and Finance Union, expressed concern about the trend. "There is nothing that can't be outsourced if they put their minds to it, but they can sacrifice quality and they can also lose control."

He said that the cost savings could often be illusory. He detected that some companies were already taking back some activities which they had previously "outsourced".

Buoyant start heralds rate rise after election

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

A new Labour government will have to raise taxes and interest rates to prevent the economy overheating and reduce government borrowing, according to New Year forecasts published today.

The predictions coincided with fresh evidence that 1997 is opening with a swing, with a survey showing business confidence at an all-time high and many companies planning to raise prices. Retailers reported that the January sales had got off to a flying start.

The shadow Treasury minister Alan Milburn yesterday predicted a new start for the economy with a new Labour government. The recovery, he said, was "threatened on every side by Tory economic failure".

The party produced a dossier on the Conservative Govern-

ment's economic record, claiming that "ordinary families have been left £2,120 worse off in tax terms by the 22 Tory tax rises since the last general election".

Mr Milburn added that inflationary pressures were growing and interest rates rising. Increasing the cost of borrowing might have to be one of the first acts of an incoming government if consumer spending accelerates between now and the election, according to a new report out today from independent consultancy Cambridge Econometrics.

It notes that if Labour does win the election, the party will inherit an economy in far better shape than its predecessors in 1974 and 1979 enjoyed. Even so, tax increases would be needed to bring government borrowing under control and finance its spending plans, the report predicts.

"Politically, the best time to

introduce these is as early as possible after the election. Fortunately the timing is also likely to be right from the viewpoint of the macro-economic background," it says.

A separate forecast from the City investment bank Goldman Sachs makes the same diagnosis. It says that although nothing dramatic should go wrong with the economy in 1997, there will be signs of overheating in a widening trade deficit and faster earnings growth. The strong pound will help keep inflation close to the Government's 2.5 per cent target but at the expense of export growth.

Unemployment is likely to fall below 1.7 million by the end of this year and to 1.5 million by the end of 1998, Goldman Sachs predicts.

"We expect the next government to take early action to ensure that the period of overheating is quite short-lived," write the report's authors, David Walton and Martin Brooks.

The Goldman Sachs report predicts a lower-than-expected shortfall in government finances in the present financial year thanks to buoyant growth, but says that by the time the economy slows back to its normal trend, the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement will be too high for comfort on unchanged tax and spending plans.

The likely need to raise interest rates will take the shine off record levels of business confidence, according to a survey of medium-sized companies by Lloyds Bank Commercial Services.

The survey shows optimistic businesses planning to increase employment by more than at any time since the question was first asked in 1993. The upturn during the past six months has been centred on services, especially transport and communications and hotels, catering and leisure.

But much of the upsurge in confidence is down to plans to raise prices and increase profit margins, the survey shows. The balance of firms raising rather than cutting prices during the last six months had been the lowest since mid-1993.

Michael Ridding, managing director of commercial banking, said: "Middle-market companies increasing prices in the coming months will stoke inflationary pressures."

The resulting upward move in interest rates would dent confidence, he predicted.



Power struggle: The National Grid will face its biggest test on 14 January when demand for power peaks

Photograph: Brian Harris

Grid rejects widespread blackout fears

Michael Harrison

The National Grid yesterday dismissed fears that Britain could be in store for widespread blackouts as the electricity transmission system nears breaking point.

A spokesman said it was "simply not true" to suggest that the Grid was in danger of not being able to meet demand, forcing it either to reduce voltage - which makes lights go dimmer - or impose selective power cuts.

The fears have been fuelled both by worries that gas-fired power stations with interruptible supply contracts could be

suddenly taken off-line and by the surge in demand during peak periods which has occurred this winter.

The big test could come on the second Tuesday of the month - 14 January - in theory the day of reckoning when demand traditionally hits its annual peak.

Heavy industrial users of electricity and power station chiefs themselves have been voicing increasing concerns about the ability of the system to cope with demand. In the last year there have been nine so-called "near misses" when the system has come close to collapse.

But the Grid said it was confident that it had enough surplus generating capacity to meet whatever demand the worst cold snap could produce.

"There is more than 60,000 megawatts of capacity linked to the transmission system while peak demand last winter was 48,700 megawatts," the spokesman added.

"It is simply not true to say the system is in danger of collapse. The amount of planning that goes into scheduling plant months ahead is huge. There are hundreds of engineers working on this night and day, both at our national control centre and in the power stations."

Part of the Grid's problem is that most of the country's power stations are located in the North while the majority of demand is in the South. This can cause bottlenecks in the Midlands, forcing Grid engineers to call up more expensive generating capacity in the South to meet demand.

It has two methods of meeting unexpected shortages. One is to issue what is known as a Notification of Inadequate System Margin - an invitation to generators to bid more expensive plant into the electricity pool to ensure demand is met.

The second is reserve capacity it keeps on the system to

meet sudden surges or unexpected breakdowns forcing power stations to trip out. The standby capacity ranges from 400 megawatts to 1,500 megawatts.

Plant availability during the winter peak has risen from 97.1 per cent at the start of the decade to 98.7 per cent last year. However, plant margin - the amount by which installed capacity exceeds forecast demand - has been steadily falling as older power stations are retired and not replaced at the same rate. Plant margins are running at 20 per cent compared with 30 per cent and higher in the early 1990s.

Shoppers on a spending spree

John Willcock

Shoppers have more than fulfilled the promise of a Christmas spending boom, with a last-minute rush helping to quell fears of disappointing sales, according to anecdotal evidence from stores throughout the UK.

Post-Christmas sales have also kicked off in buoyant fashion. Verdict Research, which compiles nationwide retail statistics, is "fairly upbeat" about the Christmas spending season. A Verdict spokesman said: "Retail sales for December were up about 7 per cent on the same period last year, which is not far from expectations."

Clothing seemed to have had a bad time compared to forecasts. But the spokesman added that more generally, although there were some downbeat figures for total sales in the week before Christmas, the last two days turned out to be buoyant.

As for the post-Christmas sales, the consultancy said they had got off to a good start.

The huge Lakeside Shopping Centre at Thurrock, Essex, attracts shoppers from all over the south-east of England, and as such its strong sales performance is a sign of the general picture. Heather Hudson-Oldall, marketing manager, says

Lakeside was visited by 36,000 cars a day in the run-up to Christmas, representing around 650,000 customers a week. This is up on last year's 32,000 cars per day in the same period.

Lakeside's busiest day of the year came on 27 December when 48,000 cars visited the complex, representing around 144,000 shoppers. Again this was up on last year's figure of around 44,000 cars.

The amount of money people spent during the run-up to Christmas definitely exceeded expectations, she says. "I don't think the Budget had any negative impact."

A spokesman for the John Lewis Partnership, the department store and Waitrose supermarket chain, said it had set itself a tough estimate for the two weeks to last Saturday, which as a group it had achieved. "Our 23 department stores signalled a 6-plus per cent increase compared to a year ago - about what we had hoped," said the spokesman.

Sue Sadler, a spokeswoman for Marks & Spencer, added to the Christmas cheer: "Towards the end of the Christmas period trade went very well. People were marching into the shops. Our sales, which started on Friday, have been very successful, extremely busy."

Water industry operates in 'tax-free zone'

Labour yesterday renewed its assault on the privatised water companies, claiming that new figures released by the industry watchdog Ofwat revealed that they paid virtually no mainstream corporation tax on their core activities last year, writes Michael Harrison.

Describing the industry as a "tax-free zone", Frank Dobson, the party's environment spokesman, said that despite making £11bn in profits and paying out £3.5bn in dividends to shareholders since privatisation, the 10 water companies had paid almost no tax.

According to Mr Dobson, the Ofwat data released by Labour show that eight of the 10 had paid no mainstream corporation tax at all on their core water and sewage businesses. Three of these - Severn Trent, Southern Water and Welsh Water - had made a negative tax contribution by offsetting their core activities against the overall tax liability of the parent company.

Mr Dobson said this was the sixth year since privatisation that the companies had paid virtually no mainstream corporation tax. "The Tory tax-free zone for the water industry just goes on and on," he added. "This all flows from the personal actions taken by John Major. He was the Chancellor who saw to it that when they were privatised the water companies had £5bn of debts owed to the taxpayer written off. At the same time he also gave the newly privatised companies a further £1.5bn cash gift from the taxpayer."

If that was not enough, he gave them tax breaks on £7.7bn of investment made at a time when the industry was still publicly owned, Mr Dobson added.

According to Labour, the only two companies which have paid corporation tax since privatisation are Northumbrian Water and South West Water with payments totalling £16m. However, they did not break down how much of this was advance corporation tax which could be offset at a later date against future tax bills.

Frank Dobson: Water firms given £1.5bn from taxpayers



Frank Dobson: Water firms given £1.5bn from taxpayers

Two Brits deliver the goods with US courier service



A nice little runner: Hugh FitzWilliam-Lay (left) and partner Richard Trayford

David Usborne
New York

At first sight, Hugh FitzWilliam-Lay easily fits the cliché of the typical Brit import in New York. He is tall and good looking and has the kind of accent that Americans fall for. But when asked at parties about his profession, Hugh's line departs from the stereotype. Neither writer nor banker, he is in fact a postman.

The description is accurate if hardly adequate. In fact, Mr FitzWilliam-Lay is president of a courier business that was recently listed as one of America's fastest-growing private companies by *Inc Magazine*. Called Citipost, it will soon be in 16 US cities and recently opened shop in London.

Citipost is run jointly out of a modest West Manhattan warehouse by Mr FitzWilliam-

Lay and his partner and the company's chief executive officer and founder, Richard Trayford, another Brit. Launched in 1991 with an investment of \$19,500, its revenue this year should exceed \$18m - that represents growth over five years of 1,664 per cent.

This being New York, however, Citipost's journey has not been without bumps. There was the embarrassment of one of their employees being nabbed two years ago as the mastermind of a \$1.9m Tiffany diamond heist. Much more awkward, however, have been their brushes with the Manhattan Mafia.

"Ex-greasy rocker meets ToF", suggests Mr Trayford, 33, who, after being expelled from DeVos Comprehensive, was a bass guitarist with aspirations to rock'n'roll fame before stum-

bling into the delivery industry after a spell as a motorcycle courier in London.

Mr FitzWilliam-Lay, 31, by contrast, studied computer sciences at Edinburgh University and came to New York, via a brief modelling stint in Japan, to help the *Economist* magazine computerise its accounts in America. Before meeting Richard, he worked as a chef in the trendy mid-town restaurant Vong.

Their secret: offering an overnight, proof-of-delivery, mailing service for volume mail that is exempt from the statutes that give monopolies for ordinary letter carriage to government postal services like the US Mail and, in Britain, the Royal Mail. In practice, this means a lot of printed material from financial institutions as well as media and entertainment companies.

The principle distinction of Citipost, however, is its low-low prices. Rather than attempting to deliver everywhere, like the US Mail or the mega-courier companies like Federal Express, Citipost operates exclusively between cities and between business districts within those cities. "We don't do the farms or the suburbs," Mr FitzWilliam-Lay explains.

Not does Citipost have huge fleets of lorries and aircraft. Parked against the wall of their Manhattan warehouse are rows of tri-carts - small metal trolleys that Citipost employees haul around the sidewalks of Manhattan. For inter-city and international carriage commercial airlines do the work.

The strategy now is breakneck growth. By reaching abroad - aside from London, Citipost is in Frankfurt and will soon be in Hong Kong - the

company hopes to tap into the flood of exempt mail coming into America. Incredibly, 17 per cent of all business-to-business mail entering the US from abroad is bound for addresses on Manhattan Island. New clients even include some monopoly state mail services, including those of Denmark and Switzerland.

"We intend to spread all over Europe and to key points in Asia," says Mr Trayford. "Once you decide to keep growing you cannot just stop. Hopefully we will become big enough that the reward will be at the end of the rainbow." The implied treasure will be the proceeds of eventually going public.

The two Brits laugh now about the diamond heist. It was perpetrated by one of their couriers who happened to have the flagship Tiffany's store on Fifth Avenue on his daily route.

In the two weeks before the police finally caught up with him, he continued making his daily calls at the shop.

On their tangles with the Mafia, they are, not surprisingly, more circumspect. They suspect, however, that their main competition in New York, three other exempt-mail courier companies, are all fronts for the feared Lucchese organised crime family.

But while they have been intimidated verbally, no physical harm has come either to themselves or the business. "The only reason they ignore us is that with their courier companies they want to maintain a public appearance of propriety and they have to turn over their cash," Mr Trayford ventures. "The atmosphere in the industry, though, is that there is absolute corruption going on."

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Use your mind
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Sama Group

Amber,
outdoor

Make your mind up time: The Independent offers readers a selection of shares ranging from blue chips to the more speculative

Blacks Leisure grabs gold in a sporting year

Never before has there been such a sporty touch to the yearly winners and losers share tables. Leading the top 20 is Blacks Leisure, the leisure wear retailer. Three football clubs feature in the winners' table; so does Ray & Robertson, which has a more than passing interest in the sports world.

And, as if to prove the all-round adaptability of the stock market's new breed of sporting companies, the leader of the bedraggled losers is a golfing group, Clubpartners International.

Blacks represents an amazing turnaround. Once beset by boardroom battles and seemingly going nowhere, the company still had an appalling record only a few years ago. Acquisitions had been disastrous; profits had disappeared and the dividend cut.

But, helped by the increasing hype surrounding professional football, a greater pursuit of keeping fit and the great outdoors, the company, under the sure direction of Simon Beni-

ley, has prospered. Profits last year were below the £3.7m peak achieved in 1992. Still, the record should be shattered this year with hopes growing that profits could touch £7m.

The footballing hat-trick is Celtic, Caspian (Leeds Utd) and Manchester Utd. "ManU", of course, kicked off the stock market's interest in soccer skills. Before the Premiership was formed, before the great replica kit bonanza had taken off and even before BSkyB was pouring money into the top clubs, the famous Red Devils slipped relatively quietly on to the market.

Such was the lack of investor enthusiasm that the shares went to a discount to the issue price and ManU seemed destined to limp along in the market's lower divisions.

Slowly investors, other than those who also supported Manchester Utd and had held shares since the flotation, sensed the huge profits which television coverage, sponsorships and replica kits were throwing at what television's football experts



Derek Pain, Stock Market Reporter of the Year, reviews the leading share price winners and the heaviest losers of 1996

like to call "a funny old game". From a 52.6p low in 1992 the shares have romped to a 667.5p high; a performance not very different from Blacks Leisure.

Celtic, as part of a cash-raising exercise, arrived on the market in the summer of 1995; Caspian is, in effect, a reverse takeover. In February it was a little media group with its shares at 8.5p. Then City whizz-kid Chris Akers, who had earlier masterminded the market debut of Freepages through a reverse deal, arrived and seemed immediately to hunt for football status. Caspian was linked with a number of leading clubs eventually capturing Leeds after clashing with at least one of the incumbent directors.

Hay & Robertson, on the undercard of the winners' table at number 20, is another struggler which has scored from the leisure wear craze. It moved into profits last year and last month announced a marketing deal with high-profile Rund Gullit, Chelsea's manager.

To counter arguments the market has gone soccer crazy the rest of the winners have little to do with sport. And many of them are small groups where modest investment interest can produce significant price movements. The losers, too, tend to inhabit the lower reaches of the market.

Runner-up Jarvis is a construction group which has soared on its acquisition of one of the British Rail maintenance operations. Occasional takeover talk has also helped.

BBB Design and Abacus Recruitment are good examples of the power of the tiddler when it comes to drawing up yearly share performance tables.

Both have modest share capitals and low capitalisations. BBB is valued at £6.4m and Abacus at £4.7m. The markets in their shares is obviously exceedingly tight. BBB is a computer company which moved back into profits last year. Chairman Philip O'Donnell has a controlling interest and three other shareholders account for near-19 per cent of the capital.

Cairn Energy and British Borneo Petroleum Syndicate are at the forefront of the strength of the oil sector and Surrey Free Inns leads the informal managed pub contingent.

Clubpartners, heading the motley crew of losers, has hunkered itself with a sad run of losses. Yet hope springs eternal at its own 19th hole. The shares, it is true, have collapsed 28.5p over the year to stand at 2.5p. Yet they should be even lower. The company warned on several occasions it was in negotiations which could lead to an offer well below the market price. Eventually it said the bid would come in the "region of 1p". So unless there are unexpected developments the shares are hugely overvalued - another of the market's little mysteries.

Memory Corporation is a spectacular faller. The repairer of defective computer chips slumped 363.5p to 60p last year. In the previous year it touched 555p.

| Top 20 winners in 1996 | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | 1996 closing price | Year's % gain |
| Blacks Leisure | 386.5p | 680 |
| Jarvis | 142.5p | 506 |
| Celtic | £385 | 488 |
| BBB Design | 77.5p | 417 |
| Abacus Rec | 84.5p | 369 |
| Fernum | 7p | 367 |
| Caspian | 45p | 338 |
| Emerald En | 4p | 300 |
| Cairn En | 418p | 268 |
| Rospar | 8p | 256 |
| Goodwin | 130p | 242 |
| Man Utd | 667.5p | 241 |
| Tex | 133.5p | 226 |
| British Borneo | 810p | 224 |
| TDS Circuits | 21p | 223 |
| Surrey Free Inns | 416p | 220 |
| Farbrar | 18.5p | 208 |
| DBS | 487.5p | 205 |
| Ray & Robertson | 132.5p | 201 |
| Pan Andean Res | 51.5p | 190 |

| Bottom 20 losers in 1996 | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | 1996 closing price | Year's % fall |
| Clubpartners | 2.5p | 91.9 |
| NSM (eus) | 8p | 89 |
| Lionheart | 7.75p | 89 |
| Memory Corp | 60p | 86 |
| Haemoco | 4p | 84 |
| Ornimedia | 11.5p | 82 |
| Jacques Vert | 32.5p | 82 |
| Yorkshire Fd | 14.5p | 82 |
| Hansom | 8p | 80 |
| Electrophoresics | 38.5p | 79 |
| Applied Dis | 40p | 79 |
| Telapac | 177.5p | 78 |
| Creighton Net | 27.5p | 78 |
| Colleagues | 57.5p | 78 |
| Fit | 100p | 77 |
| Alpha Omikron | 5p | 74 |
| Forward Tech | 25p | 72 |
| First Call | 7.75p | 69 |
| Campbell & Am | 5.25p | 69 |
| Ting | 14.5p | 66 |

Something old and something new from City professionals

Most of the 10 fund managers who tipped shares for us last year have emerged with reputations intact. Indeed the 23 per cent overall gain registered by their selections over the past year is close to double the 11.6 per cent gain recorded by the market over the same period.

As ever, there were widely varying performances. Bernard Clark at the renamed Hill Samuel Asset Management emerges as the clear winner with Sema, the computer services group, which more than doubled. After being runner-up last time he receives a well-deserved bottle of fizzy drink.

Also worthy of more than honourable mention is Colin McLean of Scottish Value Management, who justified his faith in recovery stocks by tipping Scholl. As predicted, new management has done wonders for the shares, which are up over 50 per cent on the year.

Philip Winston of BZWIM, part of the mighty Barclays empire, also proved a consistent outperformer. His choice of Trinity International, the rapidly-expanding newspaper group, showed a healthy 35 per cent gain although that was not enough for him to retain last year's top spot.

At the other end of the scale, the failure, again, of the conglomerate sector to spark into life proved the undoing of Mike Grimble of Norwich Union, who tipped BTR, and Vanessa James of Legal & General, whose choice was Tomkins.

They are joined in this year's more limited entry by some other old faces, along with a smattering of new competitors.

Bernard Clark
Hill Samuel AM
The UK equity market is short

of genuinely advanced technology share issues, so there were few surprises amongst the experts when shares in nuclear specialists AEA Technology quickly raced up from their 280p flotation price last year to 396p. No further nuclear power stations are planned for the UK, but there will still be considerable work to be done on de-commissioning old and obsolete plants, particularly overseas. Even so, the company expects future growth will come mainly from non-nuclear products and outsourcing services to industry, ranging from robots to software.

The current share price seems high enough for the present, but by the end of 1997 margins should be moving up rapidly as the effect of re-structuring fades. By then, a market capitalisation to sales ratio of 1.5 will be more appropriate, giving a price target of 550p.

Colin McLean
Scottish Value Management
With many of 1996's trends set to continue in the coming year, I believe growth businesses will still be at a premium. My share for 1997 - Cairn Energy, the oil and gas exploration and production company - has already been a winner over the past 12 months. However, while it starts 1997 at higher levels, growth underlying asset progress means that the shares are still cheap.

Drilling success in 1996 has turned Cairn into a substantial independent oil company. Its recent takeover of Command Petroleum of Australia, which operates in India, adds to its attractions. Capitalised at around £500m, with the shares at 417p, Cairn could even attract a bid itself, in a sector where I expect

more corporate activity in the coming year.

Julian Fosh
Scottish Amicable
It is time to relight that fire at British Gas. Following a near 50 per cent underperformance over the last two years, the three key issues which have dogged the company during this period are close to resolution. Firstly, the recent deal with BP to settle some of BG's loss-making "take-or-pay" contracts is an extremely positive move, establishing a base level for the liabilities at around £2bn.

Secondly, February's division of the company into two constituent parts should enable the undervaluation of the oil exploration division, which is as big as Lasmo and Enterprise combined, to be corrected. Finally, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation into the last regulatory review should be resolved by 13 April. A favourable outcome could theoretically be worth £2bn to British Gas. The shares at 224.5p are a buy for the brave.

Justin Seager
Kleinwort Benson
SkyePharma, the new vehicle of Ian Gowrie-Smith of Medeva fame, is a small company with expertise in drug delivery technology. As a result, it offers the growth potential of a pharmaceutical company, with lower risk, as the customers are the drug companies which have already taken the commercial risk of identifying new compounds. Skye currently has relationships with more than a dozen international drug companies, including SmithKline, Roche, Eli Lilly and Bristol Myers. Its clients benefit from product differentiation and

more flexible dosing, which also attracts doctors and patients. In return Skye receives royalty payments of 3-5 per cent. The shares are currently 73.5p.

Mike Grimble
Norwich Union
Where return goes, so does risk. What promised to be a good year for equity and bond markets was put into jeopardy in December 1996 as equity investors found that high returns bring high risks. However, the bulls won in the end.

We expect more volatility in the equity and bond markets in 1997. Investors who are less risk tolerant might consider commercial property, through the medium of an authorised property unit trust, such as Barclays Unicorn, recently recorded at a mid-price of 257.6p.

Robert Talbot
Royal Sun Alliance IM
George Simpson has only been managing director at GEC for a few weeks but he has realised that urgent action is needed. His four main aims are to improve the strategic focus, address the cash mountain, change to a more customer-facing culture and concentrate the development spend to improve the growth rate. The first two objectives should bring immediate benefits. Despite the challenge of how to deal with the consolidation of the European defence industry, the bull case for GEC lies in this corporate restructuring. All this upside can be bought for a market rating at the recent price of 382p, making the stock a convincing buy.

Tom Crombie
Scottish Equitable
Making money in 1997 is not going to be easy. I expect to see a lot of volatility and decisions about EMU later in the year. However, the stock market background is really quite good and I am going for Sainsbury, currently out of favour with just about everyone. Profit forecasts have been cut again since the interim in November and the share price has performed very poorly in the last few years. It used to be thought of as the Rolls-Royce of the food retail industry, but now everyone thinks it has lost its way.

Well, I like Sainsbury. The underlying consumer climate is good and the do-it-yourself business should do well next year. The share price discounts a lot of bad news and gives an above average yield. It is a turnaround story with a danger that they will continue to lose market share, but I think it is basically a good operation and they will get it right again. Worth buying at 388p.

Vanessa James
Legal & General
The case for British Aerospace rests both on fundamentals and its pivotal position at the heart of the possible rationalisation of the European defence industry. The company has shown itself able to control its finances and there are few concerns over its dependence on the Saudi Al Yamamah contract. The company has established itself as a system integrator and prime contractor with excellent profits and dividend growth potential. Meanwhile, the recent McDonnell Douglas-Boeing merger has removed one commercial aircraft manufacturer. The airlines will now have a strong incentive to support a viable competitor to Boeing.

Storehouse shares have had a torrid time in recent months as the market has become worried about its flat sales and profits that appear to be driven by cost-cutting. Shares in the BHS and Mothercare group have plunged from 361p in April to 258p at the year's close but they now look oversold. They trade on a forward rating of just 12, a substantial discount to the sector which seems an anomaly.

Finally in this trio of retailers comes Allers. Its department stores are not exactly sexy but are starting to look interesting as an investment. The duty-free business has gone and recent sales growth at the 30 department stores has been strong. There is also the prospect of sales growth at the recently purchased Owen Owen stores. The shares have taken a tumble this year but at 140p now trade on a very low rating.

Last year looked a tough one for tipsters, but as it turned out *The Independent's* selections respectably outpaced the market's 11.6 per cent rise.

The prospects for the next 12 months are more difficult to divine than the last, with a general election looming and Wall Street looking ever more precarious after the mountainous heights scaled by US equities in 1996.

None the less, our tips for this year provide a wide spread of large capitalisation stocks to add, we hope, sparkle.

Retailing is a sector which should do well in the expected consumer boom in 1997. It is the year when Sainsbury, the slumbering giant of the industry, must come to life. If it doesn't then it will be revamped, taken over or even broken up. Assets are more than 120p a share with Selfridges probably worth 45p. The shares have enjoyed a festive rally. At 95p they are selling at 18 times prospective earnings.

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and the current price of 749.5p, while historically high, still leaves room for growth.

The real money for investors is more likely to be made in the riskier parts of the market. Some investors might be put off by the fact that Flextech, which owns pay-TV channels such as UK Gold and Bravo, has never made a profit, and yet has seen its market capitalisation soar to an impressive £750m. Profits are in sight, however, thanks to a joint venture with the BBC to launch new channels for digital. The new business, based on the BBC's huge programming library, will build on a few stellar assets already in the Flextech stable, including a 20 per cent stake in Scottish Television and a controlling share (soon to be 100 per cent) in UK Gold and UK Living, which are worth £200m between them. Flextech could emerge as the digital champion, emulating the spectacular rise of BSkyB. The shares at 677.5p are worth a punt.

In the same vein is Pace Micro Technology. With the way now clear for the launch of up to 200 digital television channels in the UK by late 1997, BSkyB is expected to give Pace the go-ahead to manufacture over 100,000 set-top boxes. Pace, one of four preferred bidders, will be pushed to meet BSkyB's tight deadline to supply the decoders, but the company's extensive experience of international digital television markets should stand it in good stead. The shares are not cheap at 230.5p, but could be rewarding.

Caspian is another company which should do well out of new television technology, having positioned itself to exploit the

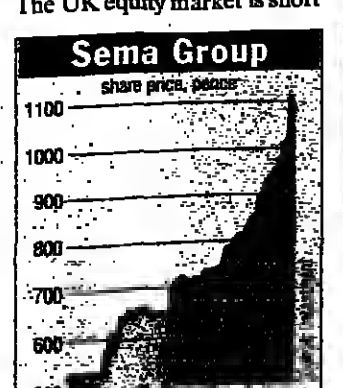
potential goldmine of pay-per-view football, which could be introduced as early as next season.

After buying Premier League club Leeds United in the summer, Caspian has assembled a formidable management team, including former Manchester United finance director Robin Lauder as chief executive of the Elland Road club. Leeds will never match the lure of Manchester United's brand name but the shares at 46p have much further to go despite almost doubling in the last couple of months.

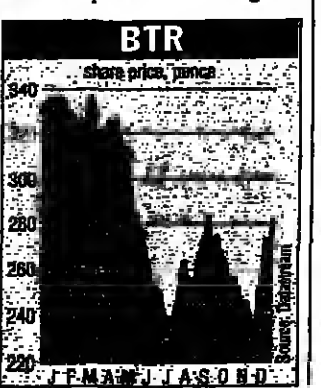
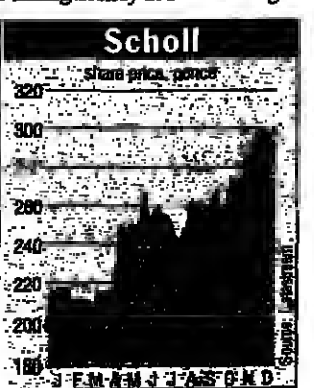
The unrelaxed potential in Ascor Holdings is not immediately obvious. As Control Securities, it was the vehicle for jailed businessman Nazam Virani and, since a £287m takeover in the summer, is now the owner of Suter, the conglomerate made famous by the controversial share-dealings of its former chairman, David Abell. But it is now in the hands of a new management team led by Howard Dyer.

Turning round Ascor has proved a struggle since he took over the reins over four years ago, but there are some decent engineering and chemicals businesses waiting to emerge from Suter. Worth backing the man, even if the shares at 285p may take a while to respond.

Finally, British Taxpayers Association could prove an outrageous but rewarding flutter. It is traded on Ofsa and profits remain in an ambition. Idea is to cash in on the new self-assessment tax regime. The company's roots go back to the British Taxpayers Association started in 1919 to help ex-servicemen. The shares, expected to move to AIM, are 28p.



| Fund managers | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| How they performed in 1996 | | | |
| | Tipped at | Price now | Gain/loss |
| Arp Wiggins | 165p | 179p | +8.5% |
| British Biotech | 178p | 205.5p | +15% |
| BTR | 329p | 284p | -14% |
| Edios | 693p | 722.5p | +4.3% |
| GEC | 355p | 382p | +7.6% |
| IMI | 328.5p | 375.5p | +14% |
| Scholl | 194p | 298.5p | +54% |
| Sema | 536p | 1,085p | +102% |
| Tomkins | 282p | 268.5p | -4.8% |
| Trinity International | 342p | 482.5p | +41.3% |



| City writers | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| How they performed in 1996 | | | |
| | Tipped at | Price now | Gain/loss |
| Allied Domecq | 525p | 458.5p | -13% |
| Caradon | 195.5p | 239p | +22% |
| Continental Foods | 84p | 108p | +26% |
| Field Group | 327p | 378.5p | +16% |
| Hillsdown | 189p | 200p | +6% |
| Laporte | 674p | 683.5p | +1.4% |
| Pet City | 382p | 594p | +55% |
| Stakis | 80.5p | 87.5p | +9% |
| Tomkins | 282p | 268.5p | -4.8% |
| Trocadero | 48p | 53p | +10.4% |

Amber, 3, has a stab at outdoing the experts

A year ago we asked Florence Warner, four-and-a-half year old daughter of our Business and City Editor, to select 10 stocks at random by throwing a dart into the shares page of a newspaper. Her portfolio has done her proud and, cynics aside, cast some doubt on night add, cast some doubt on the worth of the City's highly paid fund-managers by hand-picked selections.

Sadly, Florence's portfolio included one clanger. Powerhouse, formerly Com-tek Re-house, was tipped at 2.5p but sources, disappeared from investors' screens during the year when it was de-listed. As far as we are aware, the oil and gas tiddler is still active but with no public still active but with no public quote it is impossible to put a value on Florence's holding. Assuming the worst - a 100

per cent fall - the 10-stock portfolio ended the year 6.3 per cent higher. A more charitable view - deeming Powerhouse to be worth what it was last January - gives Florence an impressive 16.3 per cent rise in the value of her fund.

Her other tips included Mirror Group (+22%), Benson Crisps (+24%) and Next (+24.5%).

This year we have abandoned the nursery for the playground and called on the skewer-jabbing prowess of Amber Stevenson, three-year old daughter of our City Editor.

Unfazed by the rivalry between her daddy and Florence's, she boldly plumped for the following: Critchley Group (88p), T&N (173.5p), Group (88p), T&N (173.5p), Jarvis (142.5p), McDonnell Information Systems (33p), Rox-



Amber Stevenson: Doing a skewer job on the City

spur (8p), Tesco (354.5p), Linden (164.5p), Lavendon (157.5p), Gartmore British Geared Income & Growth Trust units (246.5p) and Aukett Associates (7p).

An O'Higgins portfolio for contrarians

Investment theories have an annoying habit of working just long enough to convince everyone they have found a sure way to stock market riches, only to stop performing promptly. The O'Higgins Theory, a system of picking supposedly top-performing high yield shares, is a depressing case in point.

Devised by an American fund-manager called Michael O'Higgins, the theory is simplicity itself. Investors, it says, should buy high-yielding shares because their low share prices relative to the income stream they generate is often an indication that the market has unfairly downgraded them.

The other advantage of high-yielders stems from the fact that dividend income has over time represented a large part of the cumulative total return from equities. A high yield should, in theory, give investors an immediate headstart.

To narrow the field of potential investments, Mr O'Hig-

gins uses a couple of selection screens. He chooses shares only from the largest blue chips because he believes large shares are less likely to fail totally.

From the highest yielding blue chips he selects those with the lowest share prices. He picks those on the basis that they are more likely to be relatively smaller companies and better able to grow meaningfully.

The success of the system during the 1970s and 1980s was remarkable given how clumsy it appears at first sight. In the 18 years to 1991, for ex-

ample, portfolios chosen on the O'Higgins criteria would have generated a compound annual return (with dividends reinvested) of 19.4 per cent compared with 10.4 per cent for the Dow Jones index. To put that in perspective, \$10,000 invested in the O'Higgins portfolios would have grown to almost \$250,000 while investing in a Dow tracker fund would have turned the same amount into just \$60,000.

Sadly, the 1990s have not produced such rich pickings. In 1995, a portfolio of five British

shares chosen with an adapted version of the theory increased by 21 per cent on average, a fraction better than the market's 20 per cent rise that year. Last year, as the table shows however, the system was a disaster, registering an average fall of over 7 per cent against the market's rise of 10 per cent plus.

There are several possible reasons for this underperformance but the most important would appear to be the preponderance of utilities thrown up by the system. In the run-up to a probable Labour election

victory worries about proposed windfall taxes have been to the fore. With many companies paying special dividends or staging share buy-backs there has also been less demand for income from institutions, which has helped keep high-yielders in the doghouse.

Things change, however, and when a share (or a system) is friendless it is usually a good time to take the contrary view. For those who fancy that time has come we have drawn up another O'Higgins portfolio.

British Gas has had a dreadful 1996 but could perform better after demerger. Imperial Tobacco remains a persistent target in the City rumour mill. Two shares which could do well this year, Allied Domecq and P&O, were knocked out of the high-yielding shortlist of 10 because of their relatively high share prices. If you believe in the system, however, you have to trust it implicitly. Better luck this time.

| The O'Higgins theory - O'Dear | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Last year's selection | | This year's selection | |
| | Price and 95 | Price now | % change |
| Hanson* | 120p | 81.5p | -32% |
| British Steel | 162.75p | 160.5p | -1% |
| National Grid | 199.5p | 195.5p | -2% |
| British Gas | 254p | 224.5p | -13% |
| BT | 354p | 394.5p | +11% |
| | | Price on 27/12/95 | |
| British Gas | | 228p | |
| British Steel | | 162p | |
| National Grid | | 190p | |
| Imperial Tobacco | | 381.5p | |
| Scottish Power | | 343.5p | |

obituaries / gazette

Pennar Davies

Pennar Davies was among the most scholarly, religious, and passionate men to have written in the Welsh language during the 20th century. A prolific writer, he combined in his poetry and prose a polymathic command of language, theology, and psychology with a personal tenderness rooted in his Christian faith, which was by turns mystical and practical in its concern for human frailty and the world's suffering.

Whether in his delicately wrought love-poems or in his more contemplative novels and spiritual journals, he laid great emphasis on both *enw* and *ogwe*, endeavouring always to balance them in a richly complex whole by means of myth, symbol, and a sometimes labyrinthine erudition which few of his readers were able to penetrate without difficulty.

There is much self-analysis in his prose works, often of an uncompromising kind and usually illuminative of the cultivated Christian mind under pressure from the barbarities of the modern world but ultimately finding equilibrium in the affirmation of traditional certainties.

William Thomas Davies was born, a miner's son, at Mountain Ash in the Cynon Valley in the old county of Glamorgan, in 1911. He took the name Pennar from Aberpennar, by which the town is known in Welsh, as a sign of his identification with the native culture of Wales. Using the pseudonym Davies Aberpennar, he wrote poems in both Welsh and English up to about 1948 but thereafter he chose Welsh, which he had learnt as a young man, as the medium for almost all his

literary work. He was deeply committed to the Welsh language and it, together with his religious convictions, was the bedrock of his nationalism. During the 1970s, together with two other academics, Ned Thomas and Meredydd Evans, he cut off the power at Pwllheli television transmitter in a campaign for an improved Welsh-language service which led to the establishment in 1982 of S4C, the fourth channel which now broadcasts programmes in Welsh.

Left-wing and pacifist in politics, he stood as Plaid Cymru candidate in the steel town of Llanelli at the General Elections of 1964 and 1966. He was an effective public speaker, though not averse to the loftier manner which his audiences and congregations came to expect of him as a leader of Welsh reli-

gious and political life. His winning of the Llanelli seat would have raised the intellectual debate in Wales by several notches above what it was during the 1960s, but it was not to be: he attracted only the more radical sections of the chapel vote and made little dent in the Labour majority.

After a brilliant career at University College, Cardiff, where he graduated in Latin in 1932 and in English the year following, he went on to Balliol and Mansfield Colleges, Oxford, and then to Yale University, where he took his doctorate in 1943. In that year he married Rosemary Woolf, a refugee from Nazi Germany, who promptly learnt Welsh and made it the language of their home. During the 1940s he was a member of the Cadwgan Group, a small circle of intel-

lectuals who used to meet at the Rhoddda home of J. Gwyn Griffiths, later Professor of Classics and Egyptology at University College, Swansea.

Davies spent three years as a minister with the Independents in Cardiff before his appointment in 1946 as Professor of Church History at Bala-Bangor Theological College, a bastion of the Congregationalist cause in Wales. In 1952 he became Principal of the Memorial College at Brecon, a post in which he remained, after the college's removal to Swansea in 1959, until his retirement in 1981.

Pennar Davies wrote in a variety of literary and scholarly modes. He published, besides a barrage of pamphlets, six volumes of verse, a collection of short stories, six novels, and several works of a theological na-

ture, of which *Y Brenin Alltud* ("The Exiled King", 1974), a study of Christ's practical goodness, is perhaps the most mature and rewarding. Some of his poems, which refer as often to Newton and Einstein as to the heroes of the Welsh pantheon, are breathtaking attempts at reconciling the discoveries of science with religious belief.

Among the figures from Welsh history to have captured his imagination was John Penry, the Puritan pamphleteer, executed in 1593 on suspicion of being the Martin Marprelate who had attacked the institution of episcopacy and lampooned the Church of England.

Some measure of Davies's wide culture and literary gifts, together with a bibliography of his publications, is to be found in the Festschrift published un-

der the editorship of Dewi Eirig Davies in 1981.

There was something enigmatic in Pennar Davies's personality which some found disconcerting, especially those who saw in him walking proof of the veracity of Benjamin Jowett's boast that the mark of a Balliol man is that he is able to excel so effortlessly. Tall, broad-shouldered, handsome, he might have seemed to many the very type of a muscular Christian, but his beatific smile hinted at a deeper sensibility that was preoccupied, in everything he did, with the revelation of the numinous in humankind.

For myself, I always found him extremely good company, not least during a trip to Finland in 1977, when, on midsummer's eve, we found ourselves sitting on an island beach to-

gether as the sun dipped, but never sank, below the horizon. I shall always remember how Davies was much taken with the metaphysical implications of the midnight sun, relishing the thought that, albeit temporarily, darkness had been banished from the world.

Meic Stephens

William Thomas (Pennar) Davies, writer and theologian: born Mountain Ash, Glamorgan 12 November 1911; Professor of Church History, Bala-Bangor Theological College 1946-50; Professor of Church History, Memorial College, Brecon 1950-59, Principal 1952-59; Principal and Professor of Church History, Memorial College, Swansea 1959-81; married 1943 Rosemary Woolf (four sons, one daughter); died Swansea 29 December 1996.

Joan Osiakowski

Joan Osiakowski is probably best remembered by her pen-name Joan O'Connor, which she adopted in 1950 as a scriptwriter for the BBC.

My first meeting with her in the flesh, as opposed to over the airwaves, was unpropitious. In 1975 my family and I moved to Hampstead in north London and when, on our first morning, I looked out of the window, I saw a respectable elderly lady picking out roses. With all the possessiveness of a proud new house owner I sallied forth to be instantly dismissed by Joan, who had inherited the garden from the previous owner and was oblivious of the fact that we had moved in. She was tall and distinguished with beautiful bone structure and had the air of a *grande dame*, but her somewhat imperious manner was softened by a beguiling smile and an easy ability for self-deprecation and mockery.

Born Joan Druce in 1899, she had an unconventional and unsatisfactory childhood, which had probably helped set a life-long pattern of self-reliance and fierce independence, regardless of accepted mores. She was brought up by a domineering grandmother who, disapproving of her feckless son's marriage to an Irish beauty, helped ensure its failure, and then took upon herself an unwelcome degree of responsibility for her granddaughter's upbringing. Grandmother Druce's brother, John Cross, was married to George Eliot, and after "Great-aunt George" died he too moved in, although he always claimed to be "just visiting".

Joan was one of the earliest pupils at the newly established Downe House, along with Elizabeth Bowen and a smattering of Frys and Darwins - Downe House having been Charles Darwin's home. There were no rules, good behaviour being based on reason, and Rose Macaulay was one of the teachers. This idyllic interlude in an otherwise unhappy childhood was abruptly brought to an end when it was discovered that one of the founders was a friend of Joan's mother, so Joan was quickly transferred to Roedean. The shock of the new regime was drastic and she twice ran away before the Principal persuaded her that as she couldn't beat the system she might as well make the best of it and help run it.

Roedean was followed by the liberating atmosphere of the

Slade, presided over by the authoritarian and sardonic Professor Tonks, who was horrified at the enormous influx of young women coming to fill the vacancies created by the war. Ironically, it was a good period for the Slade, still basking in the glory of the achievements of its immediate pre-war students - Spencer, Gertler, Carrington, Nevson and many others - and her fellow students included Winifred Knights, Mary Attenborough, Eve Kirk and a selection of gifted young ladies.

However, after a year she moved on to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, followed by a couple of seasons at the Old Vic with Lilian Baylis, during which she had the privilege of turning the pages for the aged Elton Terry at a public reading. A cousin of her father's, Gwendoline Otter, enjoyed giving fashionable artistic parties in Chelsea at which young actresses were especially welcome, and it was at one of these she met her future husband, Stanislas Osiakowski.

In 1927, with a small legacy from an aunt, she and Osiakowski, with whom she was by now living, opened the Literary Book Company, in two rooms in Coptic Street, London. Following the pattern of avant-garde bookshops in Paris, and with the encouragement of Jim Ede, they began showing the work of unknown young artists and when, two years later, they moved into a building owned by the British Museum at 34 Bloomsbury Street they changed the name to the Bloomsbury Gallery.

Ben and Winifred Nicholson, Christopher Wood, David Jones, Barbara Hepworth and John Skeaping are just a few of the names associated with the gallery at this time, as are those of a number of the Slade girls including Mary Attenborough (Potter), who had her first one-man exhibition there in 1932. Following a successful Diaghilev exhibition in 1928, the Bloomsbury Gallery became also a favourite venue for the work of Russian and Eastern European artists. In 1937 the gallery made one further move, this time to South Molton Street, as the British Museum wished to redevelop the Bloomsbury Street site.

During the summer of 1939 Joan and her new husband, plus their daughter Felicia, went to Poland to visit his fam-



Joan Druce (Osiakowski) in the Bloomsbury Gallery, 34 Bloomsbury Street, c.1930

ily and were lucky to escape on the last train before the outbreak of the Second World War. On their return they closed the gallery and moved to Keot, where they spent the war years; Joan taught French at Benenden and Stanislas proselytised on behalf of the Soviet Union. After the war, with gallery records and stock destroyed by a bomb and insufficient funds to start up again, they settled in Hampstead, where Joan made a new career, adapting literary classics for the BBC, writing scripts and co-authoring a cookery book, *Food for Thought* (1957), with Cecily Finn (Zimmerman).

She continued adapting novels until just short of her 90th birthday when her memory began to fade, but she would still reminisce happily over Sunday lunch about times past to Kent or Rutland, theatricals at Capesmore Hall in Cheshire or trips to France. She maintained a lively independence.

supported CND and at election time proudly covered the windows of her pink cottage with Labour Party posters.

Her final years were spent in a home in Lincolnshire, close to her daughter but sadly far from the interests and friends that had been the focus of her life.

Feyton Skipwith

I first met Joan Osiakowski in 1937 and an instant liking developed based on our mutual inability to understand the rules of bridge, writes Cecily Zimmerman. We separated our lives until in 1950 we met again by chance on Hampstead Heath, discovered we were neighbours, and had both been writing, so we decided to try our hand at television, which was just becoming popular.

To our amazement we sold our first attempt at a series to the BBC, but it was later dropped due to our total ignorance of television techniques. However, we enjoyed writing so

much that for 10 happy and hilarious years we wrote afternoon plays, humorous series, a cookery book and ideas for two films. Osiakowski and Zimmerman seemed unsuitable names for a comedy duo so Joan became O'Connor and I reverted to my maiden name of Finn.

After 10 years Joan felt the need to develop on a more serious level and turned her talent to adapting classic novels for BBC radio. She would read a book five times, make notes, and then write her own version with no further reference to the original. Balzac, Mauriac and Rebecca West were among the authors she brought to radio with inimitable flair and honesty.

Joan Druce, gallery owner and writer: born 22 March 1899; married Stanislas Osiakowski (deceased; one daughter); died Cherry Willingham, Lincolnshire 30 December 1996.

Peter Dormer

Peter Dormer was one of the most idiosyncratic and combative of contemporary writers on the visual arts in Britain.

His writing and his exhibitions bristled with awkward questions and odd perspectives. He condemned the complacent nature of British culture, at times with a loathing that recalled Jim Dixon's tirade in Kingsley Amis's novel *Lucky Jim*. But he also liked to defend what he called "middlebrow, middle-class" England, speaking up for skills neglected by high culture, such as flower arranging, cooking, juggling, dentistry and DIY.

The meaning of skill and the purpose of the crafts were two themes that dominated his writings to the 1980s. He was at pains to emphasise what he believed to be the nature of the craft project: "a world of modest ideas with a straightforward vocabulary of familiar and functional forms". A trio of touring shows he organised for the Crafts Council, "A Closer Look At Rugs, Lettering and Wood" (all in 1983), suggested the strengths of his approach.

Each show was concerned to place the work of individuals in a social context. Thus lettering was seen in conjunction with architecture, furniture and wood in terms of techniques, design and hatch production. The processes of designing and making were explored through examples of work in progress diagrams and extended didactic exhibition panels.

Ultimately, for Dormer, fine art and much craft were peripheral activities to be co-ordinated with the essential and valuable work of the designer. His best book, *The Meanings of Modern Design* (1990), took an original look at the complex relations between design and consumers and at the symbolism, metaphor and morality of product styling. This was surely the only design survey to include a disturbing photograph of an animal restrained for product testing - as an example of what Dormer called "invisible" or "below the line" design processes kept hidden from consumers.

The Art of the Maker (1994) was another very personal book, much inspired by the scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi's ideas about tacit or personal knowledge. Its core was experiential as Dormer grappled step by step with the skills of figurative clay model-

ling and calligraphy (characteristically eccentric choices) in an attempt to understand the special kind of undervalued knowledge involved in craft processes, in simultaneously designing and making.

Dormer spent his infancy in an army hut adapted for emergency housing just after the Second World War. In 1955 his family moved to a meanly designed new council estate in north Cambridgeshire, a place he recalled as the antithesis of the post-war promise of a new Jerusalem. The beauties of true modernism came his way as a school boy when he attended Walter Gropius and E. Maxwell Fry's humanely laid out Impington Village College in Cambridgeshire. Jim Ede's gallery, Kettle's Yard, in Cambridge, also delighted him, though in later years Dormer had harsh things to say about Ede's self-conscious simplicity. Tasteful piles of pebbles on polished oak tables came to ring false as Dormer became increasingly fascinated and appalled by well-intentioned middle-class aesthetics and by the soup convolutions of the English class system.

Impington was followed by two years at art school at Bath Academy of Art, in Corsham, and then at Manchester, an experience that left him doubtful of the value of an institutionalised avant-garde. In particular, artists' claims to a special level of risk-taking, experiment and innovation were seen by Dormer as "a self-delusion that leaves most other professions (especially those who take real risks of life, death and possible penury) bemused." In Dormer's view, contemporary artists were less competent than dentists and nurses, more pampered than their predecessors and, worst of all, outside the "real" economy and too ready to "seek the apotheosis of uselessness".

Between 1969 and 1972 Dormer read Philosophy at Bristol University and then worked as a teacher and in local government. He also served as a Labour councillor in Ealing, west London, from 1978 to 1982, where he learnt some tough debating skills. In 1978 he had begun to write for *Art Monthly* magazine, then under the inspired editorship of Peter Townsend. In the early 1980s he made the bold decision to become a full-time writer, contributing a regular "Artbloggy" column to *Art Monthly* which



Dormer: the art of the maker Photograph: Edward Barber

cast a witty, disenchanted eye over state funding for the arts, the burgeoning of fashionable theory and the uneasy relationship between craft, design and architecture.

The objects that Dormer admired by the end of the 1980s were the visibly useful modest ones - thoughtfully designed ceramics and innovative furniture, both one-off pieces and prototypes for mass production. His flat in the Barbican, shared with Jane, his wife and dearest friend, revealed a humane and rational taste, tempered by a romantic sensitivity to materials and processes. In the last few weeks of his life he radiated a remarkable energy and optimism, planning books and projects and, as always, generously encouraging other writers and researchers.

For Dormer design and morality were inextricably linked. His seven published books (with two further books to appear posthumously), numerous exhibition catalogues, talks and articles take the reader to the heart of the stormy design debates of the last 15 years.

Tanya Harrod

Peter Andrew Dormer, writer: born Fakenham, Norfolk 1 January 1949; Assistant Education Officer, London Borough of Havering 1976-79; Assistant to Chief Education Officer, London Borough of Brent 1979-81; Councillor, Ealing Borough Council 1978-82; Reviews Editor, *Crafts* 1981-83; Co-director, *Design Analysts International* 1987-90; Visiting Fellow in the Critical Appreciation of the Applied Arts, University of East Anglia 1994-96; author of *The New Jewellery* 1983, *The New Ceramics* 1986, *The New Furniture* 1987, *Meanings in Modern Design* 1990, *Design since 1945* 1993, *The Art of the Maker* 1994, *Jewelry of our Time* (with Helen Dunn) 1995; married 1974 Jane Smith; died London 24 December 1996.

Professor Leslie Kastner

Leslie Kastner was an academic of the old school who pursued his research interests because of their intrinsic value, in contrast with the present tendency in universities to measure everything in terms of market value. In his 21 years with the Engineering Department at King's College London, he succeeded in strengthening, considerably, the esteem in which King's College engineers are held in the outside world. He secured the establishment of the professorships of Powder Technology and Internal Combustion Engineering and his own research attracted the conferment from his own university, Cambridge, of the degree of Doctor of Science in 1967.

Kastner was born in 1911, the son of Professor Leon E. Kastner, a professor of French Language and Literature at Manchester University. He was educated at Drexhorn Castle School, Midlothian, and at Highgate School, from where he went to Clare College, Cambridge, to read for the Mechanical Science Tripos.

On graduation, he joined Davies and Metcalfe, a company of locomotive engineers in Stockport, first as an apprentice and between 1934 and 1936 as a development engineer. In 1936 he was appointed to the Osborne Reynolds Research Fellowship at Manchester University, where in 1938 he became a lecturer in Engineering

and, in 1946, a senior lecturer. His early research was concerned with the behaviour and design of ejectors; steam or air-driven devices used for pumping air or other gases, thus creating a vacuum. This arose from his experience during his apprenticeship, which involved the manufacture of such devices. At Manchester, he came under the influence of Professor G.F. Mueckow and this inspired his interest in the thermodynamics and gas dynamics of internal combustion engines, a research area which he subsequently continued at Swansea and King's College London. He was awarded the Institution's Prize of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers

in 1939 and the Herbert Ackroyd Stuart Prize in 1943. He was later, in 1956, also awarded the Dugald Clerk Prize.

In 1948 he moved to become Professor of Engineering at the University College of Swansea, becoming Head of the Combined Engineering Department in 1949. This coincided with the beginning of post-war expansion in universities and Swansea, under the direction of its newly appointed Principal J.S. (later Lord) Fulton, was determined to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Kastner's period at Swansea saw the commencement there of a building programme in engineering, resulting eventually in the creation of the three separate departments of Mechanical, Civil and Electrical Engineering.

A similar situation applied at King's College London, where he was appointed Professor in 1955. Civil and Mechanical Engineering were combined and, in his first year, the college was concerned with the separation of the two disciplines. Kastner became Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Kastner became a member of the Council of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1955 and, thereafter, played a full part in the institution's main committees, with eight years on the important Membership Committee and even longer on the equally important Edu-

cation Committee. He was also, over the years, a member of various committees of the Council of Engineering Institutions.

At London University he took a full share as a member of committees, including being Dean of the Faculty of Engineering of the university from 1974 to 1976. Within King's College he held the chairmanship of several major committees including that responsible for the supervision of the Maceadam Building, a new wing to the college which provided much-needed additional facilities for both students and Engineering. His contribution to college life was recognised by his being made a Fellow of the college in 1974 and his election as a Mem-

ber of the Corporation and of the Council of the college. Kastner was a very private person, with a rather formal manner, who possessed a quiet sense of humour. He took up painting and spent much of his retirement producing watercolours. He also spent many hours walking on Dartmoor, where he had a cottage, and in Wales, with his wife Joyce, whom he married in 1958. However, a principal activity in his retirement was his research and subsequent biography of Auguste de Busbecq, a Habsburg ambassador of the 16th century. This gave him much enjoyment over a period of some 10 years, culminating with the treatise's being presented

to the Austrian Library in Vienna.

Norman Borrett

Leslie James Kastner, engineer: born 10 December 1911; apprentice, Davies and Metcalfe Locomotive Engineers 1930-31, 1934-36, development engineer 1936-38; Osborne Reynolds Research Fellow, Manchester University 1938; Lecturer in Engineering 1941-46, Senior Lecturer 1946-48; Professor of Engineering, University College of Swansea 1948-55; Professor of Mechanical Engineering, King's College London 1955-76 (Emeritus); Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, London University 1974-76; married 1958 Joyce Lilington; died Eastbourne 30 October 1996.

the first rocket to pass near the Moon - the unmanned Russian *Luna 7* - was launched, 1959; 66 people died after a barrier collapsed at Trocadero football ground, Glasgow, 1971. Today is the Feast Day of St. Adalberto or Adalard, St. Basil, St. Caspar del Bufalo, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Macarius of Alexandria, St. Munchin, St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. Vincent and The Holy Name of Jesus.

Lectures

National Gallery: Nicholas Penny. "Paintings from Copenhagen (11: Mantegna, *The Dead Christ*". 1pm. British Museum: Della Pemberton. "Avalokitesvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion". 1.15pm.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry presents the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am and the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr M. C. Danilich and Miss E. K. Booth
The engagement is announced between Mr Danilich, of Dulwich, and Mrs Ethel Ingeborg Danilich, of Brighton, and Elinor Katherine, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs John Booth, of Wimbledon.

Birthdays

Mr David Bailey, photographer and film director, 59; Sir Richard Baylis, former Physician to the Queen, 80; Mr Leopold Brook, former chairman, Simon Engineering, 85; Mr Christo-

pher Campbell, chairman, British Shipbuilders, 61; Admiral William J. Crowe, US ambassador, 72; The Duke of Devonshire, former Chancellor of Manchester University, 77; Professor Sir Kingsley Dunham, former Director, Institute of Geological Sciences, 67; Mr David Grayson, cricketer, 43; Mr Walter Harrison, former MP, 76; Mr Algernon Sherbrooke, Lord-Lieutenant for Hampshire, 53; Mr Piers Merchant MP, 46; Sir Bruce Pannell, Governor, Bank of Scotland, 59; Sir Charles Reece, former research and technology director, ICI, 70; Mr Edmund de Rothschild, director, N.M. Rothschild and Sons, 81; Air Marshal Sir Ernest Siddy, 84; Professor John Thomas, chemist, 71; Sir Keith

Thomas, President, Corpus Christi College, Oxford, 64; Sir Michael Tippett, composer, 92; Dame Rachel Waterhouse, former chairman, Consumers' Association, 74; Mr Robert Wilmut, chairman, Wilmut Enterprises Ltd, 52; The Right Rev Kenneth Woodcock, Assistant Bishop, Worcester, 73.

Anniversaries

Births: John Manners, Marquis of Granby, military commander, 1721; James Wolfe, general, 1727; Karl Wilhelm Dindorf, classical scholar, 1812; Oskar Hostinsky, critic and librettist, 1847; Count Folke Bernadotte at Wiesborg, soldier, humanitarian and diplomat, 1948; George Gilbert

Aime Murray, classical scholar, 1866; Jimmy Nervo (James Holloway), comedian, 1897; Isaac Azimov, biochemist and science-fiction writer, 1920; Deaths: Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso), poet, 17; Philip V. King of France, 1322; Martin Schongauer or Schöen, engraver and painter, 1491; Alexander Wedderburn, first Earl of Rosslyn, Lord Chancellor, 1808; Dr John Mason Good, physician and author, 1827; Barthold Georg Niebuhr, historian, 1831; Fabian Gottlieb Bellinghousen, polar explorer, 1852; Dr Andrew Ure, chemist, 1857; Friedrich Wilhelm IV, King of Prussia, 1861; Alexander William Kinglake, author, 1891; Sir George Biddell Airy, astronomer royal, 1892; Sir Edward Augustus Bond, librar-

ian of the British Museum, 1898; Léon-Philippe Tisserand de Bort, meteorologist, 1913; Carl Goldmark, composer, 1915; Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, anthropologist, 1917; Sabine Baring-Gould, clergyman and author, 1924; Eleanor Rathbone, social reformer, 1946; Edna May, actress, 1948; Dick Emery, comedian, 1983. On this day: the Spanish army recaptured Granada from the Moors, 1492; the Académie Française was established by Cardinal Richelieu, 1635; Georgia became the fourth of the United States, 1788; Britain joined the alliance with Russia and Turkey, 1799; Louis Daguerre took the first photograph of the Moon, 1839; Wagner's opera *The Flying Dutchman* was first produced, Dres-

den 1843; Sir Robert Napier led a British expedition to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) to release the imprisoned British Consul, 1868; the first municipal crematorium was opened at Hull, 1901; Port Arthur, Manchuria, was captured by the Japanese, 1905; the present building of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London, opened, 1905; the Japanese proclaimed Manchuria to be the puppet Republic of Manchukuo, 1932; a rising of anarchists and syndicalists took place in Barcelona, 1933; Britain and Italy (under Mussolini) signed an agreement on the status of Mediterranean countries, 1937; King Zog of Albania was deposed, 1946; cupronickel coins were issued in the United Kingdom to replace silver, 1947;

Announcements for GASTRO-BURBS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding announcements, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephoned on 0171-261 0111 (24-hour answering machine 0171-261 2012) or faxed to 0171-261 2013 and are charged at £4.50 a line (VAT extra). They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry presents the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am and the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am.

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Jones to
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sports letters

RACING RESULTS

THE INDEPENDENT
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sport

Hennman ready for Gustafsson

Tennis

DERRICK WHITE
reports from Doha, Qatar

The British No 1, Tim Henman, made a confident start to 1997 yesterday when he coasted into the quarter-finals of the Qatar Open in Doha. The 22-year-old beat Egypt's Tamer El Sawy 6-3, 6-2 to score his second recent success over the player ranked 149th in the world.

Henman, who beat the Egyptian 6-7, 6-2, 6-2 in a dead Davis Cup rubber on Wimbledon grass last September, needed just 31 minutes to take the first set and was even more impressive in the second. El Sawy beat the third-seeded Dutchman Jan Siemerink, the world No 15, 6-3, 6-7, 7-6 in the first round after battling through the qualifying competition.

The result means that Henman will improve his present world ranking of 29 which is based on a player's best 14 tournaments during the past 12 months. Henman, who took just 65 minutes in all to overcome El Sawy, will meet Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson in the quarter-finals. The fifth-seeded Gustafsson lost to Henman at Wimbledon.

The Swede, who celebrates his 30th birthday on Friday, beat Slovakia's Dominik Hrbaty 6-2, 6-4 in the second round.

The Australian Patrick Rafter paid a high price for his sportsmanship when the Russian, Andrei Cherkasov, beat him in the second round of the Australian Hardcourt Championships in Adelaide. The unseeded Rafter was one point away from leveling the match at one set all when he overruled officials, saying that his shot had landed out.

Because of his honesty, Rafter found himself 13-14 down in the second-set tie-break, instead of being ahead 14-13. He lost the next point to succumb to Cherkasov, a wild card entry, 6-2, 7-6.

"Very few guys would do what he did. Normally you wouldn't say anything and just keep playing," Cherkasov said of his opponent's gesture.

In the next round, Cherkasov will play Sweden's Mikael Tillstrom, who advanced without hitting a ball after the Zimbabwean Byron Black withdrew with a stomach virus. In the first round, Tillstrom beat the world No 3, top seed and defending champion, Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia.

Marc Rosset started the year on a disappointing note when he was forced to retire with a back injury from the Hopman Cup match against South Africa to end the Swiss team's run in the mixed-team event in Perth.

Rosset, wearing a back brace, looked set to steer the second

seeds to a comfortable victory in their Group B tie after the teenager Martina Hingis had easily disposed of Amanda Coetzer 6-1, 6-2 in under an hour.

The tall right-hander was in command of his match against world No 10 Wayne Ferreira, leading 6-0, 2-0 when he collided with a ball girl at the net and fell to the court clutching his back. The Swiss continued after a pain-killing injection and chiropractic treatment but grimaced in agony at the change of ends and was unable to go on.

Rosset's career has been plagued by back injuries and he further damaged muscles around a lower disc during practice on Saturday. He forfeited his opening singles tie to Romania's Adrian Panu on Monday, but managed to play the mixed doubles with Hingis to secure a 2-1 victory. "That's certainly the only match I've ever won where I walked off the court after winning only one game," Ferreira said. Rosset and Hingis had to forfeit the mixed doubles.

Croatia, France, Australia and the United States are contesting Group A of the event and Switzerland, Germany, Romania and South Africa are in Group B. The South Africans will qualify for the final if they beat Romania tomorrow.

Results, Digest, page 21



Martina Hingis powers on to victory for Switzerland against South Africa yesterday in the Hopman Cup before Marc Rosset's mishap. Photograph: Tony McDonough/Reuters

Ryder Cup venue is defended

Golf

The billionaire owner of Valderrama, the Spanish club which stages the Ryder Cup in September, yesterday launched a scathing attack on critics of the venue.

Jaime Ortiz Patino, the Valderrama president, also accused a former Ryder Cup captain of claiming that Spain cannot cope with golf's most important team event.

"Let us lay to rest once and for all the unpleasant, nay ridiculous, myth started by a former Ryder Cup captain who clearly should know better," Patino said. "The premise we've all heard it - Spain can't organise a raffle." Patino did not name the captain.

"How sad these nonsensical ideas should persist. Do we have to keep reminding everybody that the World Cup soccer and Expo '92 were enormously successful and that the Barcelona Olympics were the most successful Games ever held anywhere, before or since? No other country has hosted three such events in such a short time-span."

Patino disagreed with claims that the area will not be able to cope with 37,000 spectators and workers each day and that fans will not be able to see anything on the tree-lined course.

"There are difficult areas, but grandstand viewing will be provided for up to 11,000 spectators and for the first time at a golf tournament there will be three Jumbo screens enabling spectators to follow the action as it unfolds elsewhere.

"We are working with the government agencies concerned to ensure smooth access to and from Valderrama. Where possible, visitors will be encouraged to use the Ryder Cup bus transportation system which is being set up to bring people from their hotels to the course. For those who have to use cars a 4,000-space car park will be provided."

Fans will be staying over a wide area and many will be paying high prices for their accommodation. "Spain has a market economy and the government does not intervene or try to exert control over prices for hotels or other accommodations," Patino said.

"It is perfectly logical that hoteliers will be reluctant to tell their lifelong suppliers of clients, the tour operators, that for the week of the 22nd September they wish to withdraw their hotel from its annual obligation.

"For this reason, room allocations for the Ryder Cup have been hard to come by and the Ryder Cup Accommodation Bureau has contracted the OET village will be barbed wire near Gibraltar.

Patino dismissed criticism of the 17th hole, which Colin Montgomerie believes could turn the match into a lottery, a claim made by the European No 1 after his ball rolled off the green into a lake in the final round of the Volvo Masters in October.

"Ever since the radical change in 1993 we have introduced a series of modifications and improvements. Seve Ballesteros, who designed the hole, has been closely involved in this process, which continues today and will result in a further modified set-up for September.

"At the 1996 Volvo Masters the 17th yielded 62 birdies and four eagles. There were 51 bogeys, eight doubles and six others. The hole was played in par on 129 occasions. It was the ninth most difficult hole during the tournament."

Patino ended by stating stories of fake Ryder Cup tickets are already circulating. "When we transmitted this information to Ryder Cup Ltd they replied that the [real] tickets have not yet been printed."

"Since access to the Ryder Cup is strictly limited. Tickets should be purchased only from authorised sources."

Jones to return in Bristol's relegation tussle

Rugby Union

Robert Jones, the former Wales and Lions scrum-half, is back in the Bristol side for their relegation confrontation at West Hartlepool on Saturday, nine weeks after undergoing keyhole surgery for a prolapsed disc.

Jones, who played in Bristol United's 27-25 defeat away to Gloucester United on Saturday, returns to boost Bristol's hopes of avoiding the drop against a West Hartlepool side who have

won just one of their nine matches this season.

"It is a great opportunity for West on their own pitch to get a couple of league points off a side in a similar position," Jones said.

"Unfortunately we haven't always been able to put out our strongest sides, due to a number of injuries, when competing with the top sides this season. We then started to fall behind but we know that with one good win that could all change dramatically."

Bristol will be without the stand-off Paul Burke and the flanker David Corkery, on Ireland international duty against Italy at Lansdowne Road.

Craig Barrow comes into the side for Corkery, with Mark Taiton playing alongside Jones. Kevin Mages replaces Simon Martin at centre.

There will be pitch inspection at lunchtime tomorrow before Bristol fly to Teesside.

Moseley, of the Second Division, have continued their recruitment campaign by signing

the former Newport and Coventry scrum-half Richard Turner from his home town club, Hereford.

The United States Eagles yesterday became the latest victims of the freezing weather. The tourists were due to kick off their four-match tour against Emerging Wales at Cardiff Arms Park, but not even the ground's undersoil heating system could overcome the elements.

The match was postponed because of a frozen pitch two

hours before kick-off, which now means the Americans will start against Neath on Saturday, weather permitting.

Leicester will make a round trip of nearly 200 miles to Worcester as they build up to Saturday's European Cup semi-final against Toulouse. The Welford Road pitch is covered in plastic sheeting and has a hot air tent suspended over it for further insurance against the severe weather. All other pitches in the area are snowbound, but the enterprising Worcester

club have an indoor pitch which Leicester will use.

The dispute between Bath and their coach, Brian Ashton, is expected to be resolved this week. Ashton is concerned that his coaching and selectorial role has been eroded under the management of John Hall. He is also seeking a clearer definition of the chain of command at the Courage League club. Ashton has, by mutual consent, been on an extended holiday since last month's Pilkington Cup tie against London Irish.

sports letters

Unfair on League players

From Chris Belsom

Sir: There are still those in rugby union who find it difficult to accept the new relationship between rugby league and rugby union and it is clear from his writing that your correspondent, Chris Hewitt, is one of them. His ungenerous and blinkered remark that it is one of the joys of the 1996 season for the "died in the wool union fan" to see the rugby league imports struggling to come to terms with the so-called "softies" game" (Tigers thrive on teamwork, 30 December).

Anyone who cannot give credit to the obvious talents and contributions of the likes of Robinson (Wasps), Quinnell (Bath), Richmond (Oxford), O'Connell (Bedford) and Jonathan Davies (Cardiff) cannot expect to have his opinion taken seriously. They have all adapted to the "softies" game very quickly and deserve great credit. Sadly most of the players mentioned see so little of the ball, as play is still, to a large extent, determined by forward control.

The Bath/Wigan games (as well as the Middlesex/Sevens) showed that the running, passing and handling skills are vastly superior in the league game which is more open and certainly faster. It is clearly in the parts of the game absent from league, and only these skills i.e. scrummaging, rucking and mauling, where union is superior. As far as tackling goes I think little needs to be said!

CHRIS BELSOM
Helmley, York

Tyne and Wear share

From Robert Crowther

Sir: I'm sure this will cause Newcastle United fans to splutter over their Sugar Puffs, but perhaps they should consider sharing grounds with Sunderland next season (Newcastle divided as "Toon army aim to camp on the moor, 20 December").

Their poorer cousins' arch rivals will have a great new stadium in 1997, which, if used by Newcastle as well, would mean many more fans could watch their team play until a decision is made on their own new stadium.

ROBERT CROWTHER
Witney, Oxon

In the soup over vegetables

From David Eagle

Sir: I was much amused by your report of incidences of celery throwing at home matches by fans of Gillingham FC.

What most interested me however was the statement by a club official that "it's been something to identify the club with... we're the only club to have a connection with a vegetable." I think that the fans of many clubs, including the likes of Manchester City and Brighton, would take serious issue with this assertion.

DAVID EAGLE
Edinburgh
Letters marked "For publication" should contain telephone numbers. They should be sent to Sports Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5UL. They may be shortened for reasons of space.

RACING RESULTS

SOUTHWELL
12.30. 1. ANONYM (U) (Barthol) 15-1. 2. BION LADY (U) (Barthol) 12-1. 3. Sea Devil 12-1. 4. 5. Sweet State 7-1. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 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Wright's day soured by Hartson

Football

Arsenal
Middlesbrough

2
0

Arsenal's first victory for nearly a month, courtesy of goals by Dennis Bergkamp and Ian Wright yesterday, takes them to within two points of the Premiership leaders Liverpool. But not for the first time this season there was a sour post-script to their performance.

John Hartson, who had replaced Bergkamp midway through the second half, was sent off in the final minute for dissent. Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough player-manager making a rare appearance, had tussled with Hartson in the Boro penalty area. The referee, Mike Reed, saw nothing untoward but Hartson was not happy and made his feelings known. He was booked and less than a minute later shown the red card for what can only have been an extremely foolish comment to the referee. It was Arsenal's fourth sending-off in their last eight games.

Prior to that Arsenal had made heavy weather of what had looked like becoming a rout. Robson, 10 days short of his 40th birthday, became the oldest outfield player to have appeared in the Premiership, but his task in the middle of Boro's defence looked more onerous as the first half wore on.

There were chances for both sides before Bergkamp's splendid opening goal. First Fabrizio Ravanelli shot just over with a free kick from fully 30 yards, then a great run by Paul Merson in the inside-left position ended with him slipping the ball through for Wright. His pull-back from the byline was promising but Robson slid in with the first of several outstanding interceptions.

After a quarter of an hour the Boro defence was breached. Martin Keown's long ball was aimed for Wright but he was beaten in the air by Steve Vickers. The loose ball dropped invitingly for Bergkamp, and the Dutchman drove a sumptuous right-footed volley from the

edge of the penalty area past Gary Walsh's flailing right hand. Juninho hit back for Boro and Keown did well to clear the danger when the little Brazilian released Ravanelli. A foul by Tony Adams on Ravanelli then gave the Italian another chance from distance, but this time the free-kick was easily gathered by John Lukic.

Middlesbrough then sat back and sacrificed the initiative, content to attack on the break. It was a dangerous policy. After being caught marginally offside, Wright was denied twice. But just when it looked as though the visitors would reach the sanctuary of half-time relatively unscathed, that man Wright scored his 200th League goal in typical fashion. Merson's

cross from the left put Mikkel Beck under pressure from Ray Parlour. Beck could only head the ball back into the danger area and Wright once again was in the right place at the right time to poke the ball past Walsh.

Middlesbrough were more of a threat in the second half but it was still a surprise when Ravanelli won a penalty with 13 minutes to go. Juninho threaded a lovely pass through to Ravanelli, he stepped inside Patrick Vieira's challenge but the Frenchman left his foot there and Ravanelli tumbled over. Up stepped the Italian, captain for the day, but his shot ricocheted off the crossbar high into the North stand.

"We should have killed the game before that," Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, said. "If he had scored, the last 15 minutes would have been difficult for us. We had problems to link our game, to get four or five passes in a row."

With Wright now starting a three-game suspension, Hartson automatically suspended for three and a lengthening injury list, linking their game might prove the least of Arsenal's problems in the coming weeks. Arsenal (3-5-2): Lukic; Keown, Adams, Robson, Parlour, Gards (Merson, 73), Vieira, Merson (Shaw, 79), Winterburn, Bergkamp (Parlour, 64), Wicks. Substitutes not used: Leighton, Garsion (4). Middlesbrough (3-5-2): Walsh; Cox, Robson, Vickers, Liddle, Merson, Emerson, Blackmore, David, Juninho (Ravanelli, 79), Ravanelli. Substitutes not used: Fyfe, Roberts, Morris, Freestone (4). Referee: M. Reed (Birmingham).

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Double ton: Ian Wright beats Middlesbrough's Gary Walsh to score his 200th League goal at Highbury yesterday. Photograph: Mike Hewitt/Alisport

West Ham betrayed by Rieper

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

West Ham United
Nottingham Forest

0
1

Life may be fraught with uncertainty for Forest's caretaker player-manager, Stuart Pearce, but in the freezing environs of Upton Park yesterday, his side gathered something definite and warming.

A precious away win lifted them off the bottom of the table and gave Pearce a reason to be cheerful as he looks forward to next week's meeting with the club chairman, when the decision will be made about whether he stays on in his position. Having gained seven

points from four games since he took over from Frank Clark, Pearce's right to continue cannot seriously be questioned.

The England full-back, who has confessed that he finds the responsibilities of his new task something of a strain, has not let the anxiety seep into his game. On an afternoon when the wind-chill factor questioned the commitment of every player – not to mention spectators – Pearce was a model of commitment and his attitude transmitted itself to his team as they held on to the advantage Kevin Campbell earned for them after 39 minutes.

The Forest striker profited from a mistake by West Ham's Danish central defender Marc

Rieper, who inexplicably failed to direct a long, hopeful punt upfield by the visitors' defender Colin Cooper back to his keeper. Apparently under the impression that Luděk Mikulski was coming to collect the ball, Rieper left it and Campbell took the opportunity of lobbing home.

West Ham's manager, Harry Redknapp, was downcast after a performance which saw his side booted off the pitch and left just four points clear of the relegation area. "We gave a goal away that you wouldn't see on a Sunday morning," he said. "It was horrendous. After that everyone becomes edgier and edgier. It was a poor performance all round."

Redknapp, with characteristic honesty, took his share of responsibility for the result, admitting that his decision to keep the Romanian striker Florin Raducioiu – the 90th-minute scorer as a substitute on Saturday – in the starting lineup at the expense of midfielder John Moneau had not worked. "He's not had a good day but not have one or two of the others."

The West Ham manager appears to be losing patience with Raducioiu and his other foreign forward, Hugo Porfiri, who was ineffectual throughout. He picked out his 64th-minute substitute Steve Jones as the best performer among the forwards. "He could be a big factor for us

now," Redknapp said. "He's honest, he works hard and he can kick a goal."

Jones's efforts notwithstanding, West Ham failed to create a single clear chance.

Half-time saw an attempt on the unofficial world record for bubble blowing. If the *Guinness Book of Records* accepts the dutiful efforts of the 22,358 spectators it will stand as West Ham's only achievement of the afternoon.

West Ham United (3-5-2): Mikulski, Deak, Bagg, Rieper, Bowen (Potts, 25), Porfiri, Bagg, Raducioiu, 79, Williams, Hughes, Newell Jones, 64, Raducioiu. Substitutes not used: Moneau, Sealey (4). Nottingham Forest (4-4-2): Crossley, Lyne, Bannister, Phillips, 18, Christie, Pearce, Cough, Haxford, Cooper, Wicks, Saunders, Campbell (Kempall, 63). Substitutes not used: Allen, Roy, Terry (4). Referee: P. Dunn (Dorset).

Coventry survive Dublin's dismissal

MARK PIERSON

Coventry City
Sunderland

2
2

Dion Dublin, Coventry's striker-turned-defender, scored his fourth goal in as many games since being moved to the back, but was sent off before half-time after an ugly flare-up.

Coventry twice behind, were happy to settle for the point which brought to an end their run of four consecutive wins.

Dublin challenged Sunderland's Michael Bridges on the touchline in the 40th minute. Both players slid on the icy surface and Bridges appeared to kick out at Dublin, who was first to his feet. Dublin retaliated by kicking at the striker as he lay on the ground. The referee, Graham Poll, had a clear view of the incident and booked Bridges and sent off Dublin.

That departure sparked Coventry into a more attacking mood. Until then, Sunderland had dominated, looking far

more at home in the tricky conditions. The players had severe problems keeping their feet but Sunderland were more attuned to the surface and kept things simple while Coventry persisted in trying to play short passing movements which continually broke down.

Sunderland went in ahead in the sixth minute. A cross from the right was knocked back by John Mullin and Bridges struck a half-volley which wrong-footed Coventry's keeper Steve Ogilvie and bobbed into the net.

Within three minutes Dublin equalised. Gary McAllister swung over a corner from the right and Dublin rose above goalkeeper Lionel Perez to knock his header into the open net.

Sunderland went ahead again in the 18th minute from the penalty spot. Mullin was going nowhere but Liam Daish bundled him over near the byline. Steve Agnew duly scored.

Daish made amends 10 minutes later with Coventry's second equaliser, again from a

centre by McAllister. From a free-kick on the right of the penalty area Scotland's captain swung the ball over perfectly for Daish to head powerfully in.

Chances were few and far between but Sunderland had most of them. Coventry had only four efforts on target and scored two from two.

Coventry City (3-5-2): Shaw, Daish, Dublin, Tyler, Williams, Richardson, McAllister, Salako, Wheen (Brown, 82), Huxford, Substitutes not used: Folan (4), Jess, Ballard, Gensior. Sunderland (3-5-2): Perez, Hall, Hughes, Orr, Mervie, Brownlee, Agnew, Mullin, Gray, Bridges, Kelly, Substitutes not used: Pearce (4), Keown, Peck, Hackingbottom, Williams. Referee: G. Poll (Ting).

Norwich find form

Nationwide League

Norwich City at last found the early season First Division form which has deserted them recently, as the former Everton defender, Matt Jackson, notched his first goal for his new club at home to Portsmouth yesterday. Jackson, who surprisingly opted to join the Carrow Road side in a £450,000 deal ahead of Birmingham, struck after 78 minutes to secure a valuable 1-0 win. A dream game appeared to be heading towards an instantly forgettable goalless draw when Jackson took advantage of a mistake by Fitzroy Simpson. The Pompey player appeared ideally placed on the goal-line to clear Andy Johnson's header from a Darren Eadie corner but miskicked horribly and Jack-

son tapped home from a yard.

A superb double strike from player-manager John Aldridge earned battling Tranmere Rovers their first win in six outings and brought West Bromwich Albion's unbeaten six-match run to a halt at The Hawthorns where supporters who turned up with shovels to remove snow from the pitch were rewarded with free tickets.

An even bigger Tranmere hero was defender David Higgins, who took over in goal after 33 minutes from the injured Danny Coyne and made two fine saves to deny Albion.

Albion took the lead after only four minutes through a header by Daryl Burgess. Aldridge levelled with a marvellous first-time shot and then scored the win with a cracking angled drive.

Worcestershire's former Phil Newport, who is confident that the England player will be fit for the start of the 1997 season, will be in the squad for the team's first game after returning from a long absence following an operation to cure an Achilles tendon problem. Newport, one of the key figures in the glory years of the last Botham era, missed two thirds of last season with the achilles setback.

SUPERSPORT SERIES (Final day of four) Southampton (29) and 122 M. Ben-Gurion (24-47). Border 315 for 8. Best 53. P. J. B. 4-7. Border won by five wickets and 135-1. 5-5. Parades (Men) 43-15.

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SPORTING DIGEST

professional circuit finals in China a fortnight ago, lines up with the former England No 3, Michael O'Driscoll.

Tennis QATAR OPEN (Doha) Men's singles, second round: M. Larsson (Swe) 6-4, 6-3; P. Pietrangeli (Ita) 6-4, 6-3; M. Larsson (Swe) 6-4, 6-3; P. Pietrangeli (Ita) 6-4, 6-3.

AUSTRALIAN HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS (Adelaide) Men's singles, second round: A. Brown (Aus) 6-4, 6-3; M. Larsson (Swe) 6-4, 6-3; A. Brown (Aus) 6-4, 6-3; M. Larsson (Swe) 6-4, 6-3.

NEW ZEALAND HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS (Wellington) Men's singles, second round: A. Brown (Aus) 6-4, 6-3; M. Larsson (Swe) 6-4, 6-3; A. Brown (Aus) 6-4, 6-3; M. Larsson (Swe) 6-4, 6-3.

NEW ZEALAND HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS (Wellington) Men's singles, second round: A. Brown (Aus) 6-4, 6-3; M. Larsson (Swe) 6-4, 6-3; A. Brown (Aus) 6-4, 6-3; M. Larsson (Swe) 6-4, 6-3.

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